Special Operations and Conventional Forces: How to Improve Unity of Effort Using Afghanistan as a Case Study

**A Monograph
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The purpose of this monograph is to offer some practical solutions to building unity of effort between Special Operations Forces (SOF) and conventional forces using operations in Afghanistan from 2001 until 2009 as a case study. The conclusion is that there are three imperatives to ensuring unity of effort between SOF and conventional forces. The first is to ensure that SOF operations and plans are nested with the overall theater campaign plan and if there is no overall theater campaign plan that SOF take the lead in its development. The second imperative is to use liaison officers that are the commander's representative and are value-added to the headquarters they liaise with. The third imperative is to ensure a command and control relationship between SOF and conventional forces which is flexible, allowing for the most robust support SOF can provide, while at the same time ensuring that forces are not working at cross-purposes. A more long-term and multi-faceted imperative that will take institutional change is that of the education of SOF and conventional forces about their respective branches, as well as prioritizing the integration of these forces during training and operations.

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Abstract

SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND CONVENTIONAL FORCES: HOW TO IMPROVE UNITY OF EFFORT USING AFGHANISTAN AS A CASE STUDY by MAJ Grant M. Martin, U.S. Army, 56 pages.

The purpose of this monograph is to offer some practical solutions to building unity of effort between Special Operations Forces (SOF) and conventional forces using operations in Afghanistan from 2001 until 2009 as a case study. In researching U.S. legal code and U.S. Armed Forces doctrine, it is clear that both the U.S. Congress and the various services intended all forces to work together towards a common end during operations. In the case of Afghanistan, it is apparent that three things complicated unity of effort between SOF and conventional forces: the lack of an Afghanistan campaign plan by USCENTCOM, the assignment of SOF under the operational control of the conventional force Joint Task Force from 2002 until 2006, and the difficulties of a transition to a NATO command structure in 2006. These complications affected both the activities on the battlefield and the synchronization of operational and strategic plans. This led to problems that included an atmosphere of mistrust and misunderstanding, support issues, conventional forces struggling to command and control SOF, unneeded restrictions on SOF, and personality conflicts that affected operations and synchronization.

Several different possible solutions to improve unity of effort exist. They are: changing the command and control structure between SOF and conventional forces, nesting SOF operations and plans with the overall campaign plan, attempting to align the proper personalities with certain tasks and positions, educating and integrating SOF and conventional forces, aligning and empowering liaison officers more appropriately, and aligning SOF headquarters with conventional force headquarters as appropriate. The conclusion is that there are three imperatives to ensuring unity of effort between SOF and conventional forces. The first is to ensure that SOF operations and plans are nested with the overall theater campaign plan and if there is no overall theater campaign plan that SOF take the lead in its development. The second imperative is to use liaison officers that are the commander's representative and are value-added to the headquarters they liaise with. The third imperative is to ensure a command and control relationship between SOF and conventional forces which is flexible, allowing for the most robust support SOF can provide, while at the same time ensuring that forces are not working at cross-purposes. A more long-term and multi-faceted imperative that will take institutional change is that of the education of SOF and conventional forces about their respective branches, as well as prioritizing the integration of these forces during training and operations. Lastly, matching up personalities to staff positions wherein conventional forces and SOF interaction is high, as well as aligning SOF and conventional forces headquarters where appropriate are also areas in which unity of effort can be increased.

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"You cannot command what you do not control. Therefore 'unity of command' (between agencies or among government and non-government actors) means little in this environment. Instead, we need to create 'unity of effort' at best, and collaboration or deconfliction at least. This depends less on a shared command and control hierarchy, and more on a shared diagnosis of the problem, platforms for collaboration, information sharing and deconfliction."
- Dr. David J. Kilcullen[1]

In 2002, after less than six months conducting Unconventional Warfare against the Taliban government in Afghanistan, United States Central Command (CENTCOM) and the rest of the U.S. Armed Forces began to turn their attention to Iraq.[2] Special Operations Command Central Command (SOCCENT)[3] wrote the plan for the initial phase of the war in Afghanistan, but CENTCOM did little for follow-on forces to prepare for the aftermath. A conventional forces headquarters, Joint Task Force (JTF) 180 succeeded the Special Operations Forces (SOF)[4] that overthrew the Taliban and received *Operational Control* (OPCON) over the SOF in Afghanistan.[5] CENTCOM ordered SOCCENT to concentrate on Iraq and the headquarters willingly conceded to the new command and control (C2) relationship of SOF in Afghanistan.[6] These events would have two effects that proved detrimental in the years to come: SOF were unable to provide the conventional forces with the most robust capability possible and the campaign plan for Afghanistan beyond the overthrow of the Taliban was never written. Thus, for

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[1] Dr. David J. Kilcullen, *Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency*, as quoted in Joint Publication 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, Department of Defense, Washington, D.C., October 2009.

[2] Brig. Gen. Patrick M. Higgins, interview by author, October 9, 2009.

[3] SOCCENT, the Special Operations component command for U.S. Central Command, is headquartered in Tampa, FL, and controls Special Operations Forces deployed in the CENTCOM Area of Operations: the Middle East.

[4] SOF in this paper refers to all Special Operations Forces, however in this paper most references specifically deal with U.S. Army Special Forces as they were the preponderance of SOF in Afghanistan at the time.

[5] See the glossary for all doctrinal definitions.

[6] Col. Mark Mitchell, email correspondence with author, October 4, 2009; Col. Roderick Turner, interview by author, September 4, 2009; Higgins, interview.

the next 4 years there was no overarching plan guiding Special Operations Forces and for almost

6 years there was no overarching plan guiding anyone- conventional or otherwise.[7] Without a

campaign plan there was nothing linking the actions of the disparate forces within Afghanistan

for the first nine years of the conflict. That situation led directly to forces working at cross-

purposes and a kind of emergent strategy by which actions on the ground were not linked to any

kind of clear end-state that supported the security interests of the United States.

This paper shows that there were periods of little to no unity of effort between SOF and

conventional forces at least as late as 2007. Because of the transfer of SOF to conventional forces

control from 2002 until late 2006, an atmosphere developed between SOF and conventional

forces that contributed to unity of effort issues even after SOCCENT regained OPCON of SOF in

Afghanistan. Unity of effort is a very important principle in the conduct of warfare. Field

Manual 3-0 lists the principle of unity of command and defines it in this way:

> For every objective, ensure unity of effort under one responsible
> commander.
> Developing the full combat power of a force requires unity of command. Unity of
> command means that a single commander directs and coordinates the actions of all forces
> toward a common objective. Cooperation may produce coordination, but giving a single
> commander the required authority unifies action.
> The joint, multinational, and interagency nature of unified action creates situations
> where the military commander does not directly control all
> elements in the AO. In the absence of command authority, commanders cooperate,
> negotiate, and build consensus to achieve unity of effort.[8]

Because conventional forces were used to having control of SOF in the past (in Afghanistan) and

because SOF were sensitive to conventional forces headquarters' attempts to regain de facto

control over them, an environment developed that made unity of effort difficult at times. This

exacerbated the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF)[9] attempts to synchronize plans

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[7] Maj. Gen. Joseph L. Votel, interview by author, Fort Bragg, NC, July 11, 2008; Higgins, interview. Turner, interview; Mitchell, correspondence.

[8] U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, by the Chief of Staff of the Army, FM 3-0, Washington DC: Government Printing Office, June 2001, 4-14.

[9] ISAF, a NATO headquarters, assumed control of Afghanistan in late 2006. The headquarters replaced Combined Forces Command- Afghanistan (CFC-A), a U.S. headquarters.

at the Regional Command level[10], as ISAF began the arduous task of creating a campaign plan in late 2007. Without unity of effort, the forces in Afghanistan stumbled from one year to the next without anything guiding them towards an end with which a sustainable stability could be reached, allowing the U.S. to withdraw.

Although SOCCENT and ISAF are putting the finishing touches on respective campaign plans today and a new SOF headquarters (HQ), the Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command- Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A), is synchronizing long-term plans with ISAF, there still exists a challenge to synchronize effects at the operational level between SOF and conventional forces. Six solutions proposed to the current situation in Afghanistan are: 1) more flexible command and control relationships between SOF and conventional forces, 2) a prioritizing of matching personalities to staff positions wherein conventional forces and SOF interaction is high, 3) education of SOF and conventional forces about the respective branches and prioritizing integration of these forces both during training and during operations, 4) prioritizing the alignment of liaison officers (LNOs) and linking them to specific situations and missions, 5) aligning SOF and conventional forces HQ as appropriate, and 6) SOF taking the lead in ensuring at least a SOF campaign plan is in place and possibly a greater campaign plan in the absence of an overarching one with which to nest SOF efforts.

In order to understand the problem and the proposed solutions, this paper will describe the literature that pertains to command and control of Special Operations Forces- both what is in U.S. Code and thus legally binds the Department of Defense with respect to SOF and what is contained within armed forces doctrine. Next, the history of the command and control (C2) relationship between SOF and conventional forces is traced from the beginning of the war in 2001 to the current situation in 2009. In addition, this paper will detail the problems the different command and control relationships have caused the U.S. effort in Afghanistan and continue to do

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[10] NATO broke Afghanistan up into 5 Regional Commands- one in the East, one in the West, one in the North, one in the South, and one in the Capital area.

so. Lastly, this author will recommend the solutions mentioned in the above paragraph and describe them in detail. The overall goal of this paper is to provide a framework with which to build unity of effort at the operational level between SOF and conventional forces, no matter the command and control relationship.

Review of Literature Pertaining to Command and Control of SOF

Introduction

Prior to identifying the history of command and control of Special Operations Forces in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and probable issues and potential solutions, it is important to understand what is required by law and suggested by doctrine. Suffice it to say that the underlying theme in both doctrine and U.S. Code is unity of effort. The three main sources for law: U.S. Code, the Goldwater-Nichols Act, and the Nunn-Cohen Amendment to Goldwater-Nichols all speak to a problem carried over from the end of World War II and exacerbated during the Vietnam War. These documents dealt with the problem that the separate military branches were too parochial to combine their efforts to carry-out their tasks during wartime. The two main sources of doctrine that apply are Army Field Manuals and Joint Publications. These sources also tend to offer solutions to the same problem: how best to organize forces so that all act in a unified manner.

It is also important to understand why command and control is important as well as the concept of campaign planning and how it relates to command and control and unity of effort. Putting the concept of command and control into context, it is many times assumed that the key to unity of effort means unity of command. Field Manual 3-0 does mention that full spectrum operations require a flexible command and control system. It goes on to list command and control as one of the six warfighting functions and one of the eight elements of combat power. Command and control is defined in Chapter five of 3-0 as "*the exercise of authority and direction*

by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of a mission." In short, command and control is the way in which a commander directs subordinate forces in order to accomplish a mission. Without some form of command and/or control, units would be free to do what they would like, which may result in units working at cross-purposes to one another. In order to synchronize these subordinate units across different operations and time domains, the U.S. Army relies on the planning of campaigns.[11]

Campaign planning arose from the need to connect the strategic aims of political leaders with the operations conducted by their military commanders. Campaign planning is the method for conducting warfare at the operational level; it came about when armies in Europe during the 17th Century found themselves unable to affect a decisive victory in one battle. Commanders found it necessary to plan for a series of battles or actions leading up to an end-state that ensured the accomplishment of a strategic objective. This plan of a series of actions became known as the campaign plan, and it was tied to unity of effort in the sense that all subordinate units in a certain area of operations would naturally need to synchronize their actions with the overall campaign plan in order to reach the strategic objective. Thus, campaign plans, as a concept within doctrine and as an important part of unity of effort, are the vehicle through which commanders guide those units they command and control to reach the ultimate strategic end-state.[12]

U.S. Code Pertaining to SOF C2

U.S. Code, interestingly enough, has no distinctive and separate code dealing specifically with SOF, although it does for the separate services of the military.[13] Individual code does, however, contain sections on SOF. Section 167 establishes United States Special Operations

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[11] Department of Defense, *Operations*, by the Department of the Army, FM 3-0, Washington DC, June 2008, Chapter 5.

[12] James J. Schneider, "The Loose Marble- and the Origins of Operational Art", *Parameters*, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, March 1989, 85-92.

[13] One could make the argument that SOF is a *de facto* service, owing to its separate budget, separation during CONUS training, and control over the careers of its soldiers and officers.

Command (SOCOM), 138 establishes the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD-SOLIC), and 113 requires the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) to report annually on the relationship between SOF and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in OEF and provide "recommendations to improve operational readiness and effectiveness of these forces."[14] In addition, in Title 50, which deals with "War and National Defense," Congress provided the United States with a "unified strategic direction," "operation under unified command," and "an efficient team of land, naval, and air forces."[15] In short, the U.S. Code, as taken from the Acts of Congress themselves, speaks to establishing a unity and a melding together of all forces in a common interest.

When looking at the specific legislation that comprises the U.S. Code, the Goldwater-Nichols Act is the most relevant. Updating much of Title 10, which deals with Armed Forces, Goldwater-Nichols did three things: empowered the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), increased authority of the unified combatant commands, and created a joint requirement for officers.[16] The only relevant part of those three changes to this paper is the authorities granted to the unified combatant commands. The changes to the unified combatant commands were intended to increase the ability of the U.S. military to conduct joint operations- not as separate services meeting on the battlefield- but as one force, equipped, managed, and provided by the separate services to the combatant commands to be controlled by the combatant commands on the battlefield. The legislation did not mention SOF, which could mean that SOF was seen as already inherently joint, and thus would usually operate that way anyway. The more likely reason behind this oversight is that SOF, at the time, was in the middle of a tug-of-war between the services and Congress and at this early date was not considered as a separate entity in and of itself. Indeed, the

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[14] Title 10, United States Code, § 113, 138, and 167.

[15] Title 50, United States Code, § 401.

[16] Chambers, John Whiteclay II. "Goldwater-Nichols Act." *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*. Oxford University Press, 2000, http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O63-GoldwaterNicholsAct.html [accessed 17 Jul. 2009].

fact that Goldwater-Nichols was passed without any legislation dealing with SOF meant that SOF was not addressed as an entity that also needed to be "joint"- outside of its own organization. Thus, while the conventional side of the Army had to cooperate with the conventional side of the Air Force, for instance, SOF did not have to cooperate with the conventional side of any of the forces and still would not fall afoul of Goldwater-Nichols legislation.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act proscribed that unified combatant commands would control all forces within their geographic areas.[17] This legislation directly answered problems associated with a lack of jointness and command and control between the services during World War II, Vietnam and Grenada.[18] The solution detailed in the legislation was that the services would provide the troops to the combatant commands and allow the combatant commander to control them directly, cutting out any service commands, service chiefs, and other influences. This would provide a direct link from the forces on the ground to the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) and President in time of war. The ultimate proof that Goldwater-Nichols worked was DESERT STORM.[19] General H. Norman Schwarzkopf controlled all forces in theater: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and even SOF. The Theater Special Operations Component Command, commanded by a Colonel at the time, advised and controlled SOF for GEN Schwarzkopf.[20]

The need for the Nunn-Cohen Amendment arose because a year after passage of Goldwater-Nichols, Congress was unsatisfied with the progress by the Department of Defense (DoD) on the priority of SOF within DoD. After requesting for years that DoD make some specific adjustments with respect to SOF, Congress decided enough was enough and passed legislation requiring DoD to establish U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and the

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[17] *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, Public Law 99-433, 99th Cong., (October 1, 1996).

[18] Chambers.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Marquis, Susan L. *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), 248.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD-SOLIC), directed all SOF forces to belong to SOCOM, dictated which activities SOF would be involved in, established separate funding for SOF (Major Funding Program (MFP)- 11), and dictated control of SOF officers to SOCOM.[21] Interestingly, the first tasks that DoD passed to SOCOM were to: break down walls between SOF and other parts of the military, educate the rest of the military to spread recognition and understanding of what SOF does, why they do what they do, and how important it is that SOF does what they do, and then integrate their efforts into the full spectrum of U.S. military capability.[22] These important tasks seemed to be what Goldwater-Nichols required of the separate branches, but since SOF was never recognized as a separate branch (and was not even a separate entity then), it would seem that it has been left up to SOCOM to integrate with the rest of the military.

Meanwhile, actions in Panama in 1989 seemed to validate the Nunn-Cohen Amendment as many saw the success there as a SOF-dominated operation. Rangers, Special Forces, Navy SEALs (SEa Air and Land Forces), and Air Force Special Operations all acted in the theater and were controlled by LTG Carl Stiner, the 18th Airborne Corps Commander, who also controlled all conventional forces.[23] As already mentioned, Desert Storm also seemed to validate the structure of SOF and the combatant commands that Goldwater-Nichols and Nunn-Cohen established.[24] Only with the debacle in Somalia and the complicated structures of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan did some realize that Nunn-Cohen might not have gone far enough in making sure SOF and conventional forces cooperated together.

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[21] Marquis, Susan L. *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), 145-147; Rothstein, Hy S., *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 39-42.

[22] Marquis, 165.

[23] Ibid, 191.

[24] Locher, James R., *Victory on the Potomac: the Goldwater-Nichols Act unifies the Pentagon*, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 446.

Legal foundations for SOF and conventional forces cooperation do not exist. Goldwater-Nichols fixed the jointness problem within the conventional force community- forcing the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines to work together and all to be controlled by one commander during wartime. Nunn-Cohen mandated that conventional forces would not control SOF during peacetime, that SOCOM would mandate training and their budget, and that SOCOM would control the career of their officers. What neither legislation addressed was how SOF and conventional forces would interact with each other. SOF was viewed as "inherently joint", and therefore were already cooperating across the "stove-piped" landscape.[25] What was missed, however, was the need for SOF and conventional forces to cooperate- both in peacetime during training and during wartime operations. Goldwater-Nichols legislation assumes that a combatant commander could control his SOF through his Special Operations Component Command (SOCC). What the authors of Goldwater-Nichols seemed unable to grasp was a situation wherein the Combatant Commander and the SOCC commander are not in the theater of operations, there is one or more conventional force Joint Task Forces in theater, and as a result there are multiple chains of command inside one country and extending back to the Combatant Command. Unity of effort was implied by having one person in charge- no matter the location of that person or the possibility of multiple areas of operation within the same theater. One solution is to look at what doctrine says about how conventional forces and SOF should operate together.

Doctrine Pertaining to SOF Command and Control

The common theme running throughout Army, Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF), and Joint doctrine is *unity of effort*. Army and Joint Doctrine describe the need for clear C2 arrangements and the value of working together as "one team." Special Operations doctrine comes at the subject from a different angle: it is mostly concerned with arguing that

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[25] U.S. Department of Defense, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations,* by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-05, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, December 2003, II-2.

conventional forces must include SOF in planning and considerations prior to operations. USSOCOM's handbook and related papers on SOF-conventional forces integration go the furthest in describing doctrinal solutions to the issues surrounding SOF and conventional forces interoperability. Doctrine is only a guide and not a prescription for how to do things. Individual and organizational interpretations confuse the subject of command and control of SOF in conventional force areas of operations. In starting with the joint and USSOCOM doctrine as the senior framework and then noting the differences and similarities between them and Army and ARSOF doctrine, it is easier to understand what influenced the efforts in Afghanistan between SOF and conventional forces and what possible solutions doctrine would recommend.

The most succinct and direct source of doctrinal guidance on the subject of SOF-conventional forces integration is USSOCOM's Publication 3-33, *Conventional Forces and Special Operations Forces Interoperability Handbook and Checklist* published in 2006. The handbook explains issues that were readily apparent as conventional forces and SOF came into closer interaction on the battlefield in Iraq and Afghanistan. These issues came to the forefront because of actions like those of Operation ANACONDA in which the alleged bungled relationship between the two caused widespread media interest as well as changes to the fight in Afghanistan and C2 structural changes to SOF.[26] Eventually, actions such as ANACONDA and others also led to more conventional forces deploying to Afghanistan. The control of the effort switched from SOF to conventional forces. The handbook notes that the worst problem facing SOF, when failing to properly integrate with conventional forces, is fratricide. [27] This is due to the unwillingness of SOF to share information with conventional forces due to SOF's concern for OPSEC and the fear that increased conventional forces exposure to mission information will

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[26] Naylor, Sean, *Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda*, (NY: Berkley Publishing, 2005), 126-137, 154, 214, 300, 365.

[27] U.S. Department of Defense, *Conventional Forces and Special Operations Forces Integration and Interoperability Handbook and Checklist* , by the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, Publication 3-33, September 2006, 2-1.

naturally lead to mission failure due to enemy knowledge of the mission beforehand. The report

also notes the many problems at the tactical level with the lack of conventional forces-SOF

integration. The solution the handbook provides is one of using a supported/supporting command

relationship between units as opposed to the traditional Army OPCON/Tactical Control

(TACON) approach.[28] This does seem to address the tactical level concerns mentioned above,

but it does not address the operational level concerns: that is, *how can SOF best integrate with*

conventional forces at the operational level in order to reach strategic objectives?

       The SOCOM handbook, though an imperfect guide, is helpful in the following areas. In

the beginning of the publication, the authors mention two other problems that affect forces at the

tactical level: missed opportunities and the delay on taking action against the enemy.[29] This

problem stems from a "lack of liaison placement and usage" and thus provides a solution to the

operational level synchronization problem.[30] In other words, the publication found the correct

cause for the tactical problems but failed to apply the solution unambiguously to the operational

level. Indirectly, the handbook addresses the need for liaisons and liaison-like structures at the

operational level, which would help solve the problems of SOF-conventional forces command

and control relationships impinging on unity of effort. There are apt descriptions of the Special

Operations Coordination Element (SOCOORD), the Special Operations Command and Control

Element (SOCCE), Special Forces Liaison Elements, and liaisons in general. Suffice it to say

that the proper use of these liaison elements would go a long way towards not only solving the

unity of effort issue but also the fratricide and other tactical issues as well, regardless of the

command and control relationship between Special Operations Forces and conventional forces.

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[28] U.S. Department of Defense, *ConventionalForces and Special Operations Forces Integration and Interoperability Handbook and Checklist* , by the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, Publication 3-33, September 2006, 2-1:2-4.

    [29] Ibid, 1-1.

    [30] Ibid, 1-1.

In short, the greatest lesson to learn from the SOCOM publication is the description of these liaison entities. First, the SOCOORD is a planning element, located at a higher headquarters, usually corps-level, which provides advice to the conventional forces commander on matters relating to SOF.[31] Providing a SOCOORD to ISAF, for instance, would ensure a robust SOF planning cell helping to synchronize SOF missions into the overall Afghanistan campaign plan. Second, the handbook describes the SOCCE, which is usually a Special Forces Operational Detachment- Bravo, or Special Forces (SF) company headquarters commanded by a major, which co-locates with a JTF and helps to synchronize SOF actions when SOF teams operate along with conventional forces units. This could be as short as one mission or as long as multiple missions taking place within the same area and with the same units. Lastly, liaison officers (LNOs) in general are described as the commander's representative and are not "watch officers, full-time planners, or augmentees." They are expected to "monitor, coordinate, advise, and assist."[32] Thus, LNOs are the key to SOF and conventional forces integration. Looking at Army, ARSOF and Joint doctrine will help to understand if these same ideas are uniformly accepted.

The Joint doctrine that most applies to the issue of conventional forces and SOF integration are Joint Publication (JP) 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, JP 0-2 *Unified Action Armed Forces* (UAAF), JP 3-0 *Joint Operations*, JP 3-05 *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*, and 3-05.1 *Joint Special Operations Task Force Operations*. Joint Publication 3-24, the new Counterinsurgency (COIN) manual, describes unity of effort as the goal and that traditional command and control structures are unrealistic. The chapter on unity of effort, chapter four, quotes David Kilcullen up-front as saying that the following items are paramount: "shared

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[31] U.S. Department of Defense, *conventional forces and Special Operations Forces Integration and Interoperability Handbook and Checklist* , by the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, Publication 3-33, SEP 2006, 3-8.

[32] Ibid, 3-3:3-8.

diagnosis of the problem, platforms for collaboration, information sharing and deconfliction."[33]

The UAAF describes in detail the importance of unity of effort and unity of command and

concludes the same as the COIN manual: that unified action is best accomplished with unity of

command: one person in charge of everything.[34] Joint Publication 3-0 echoes the need found in

the UAAF for unity of action and some of the language dealing with SOF seems lifted directly

out of SOCOM's 3-33, Joint Special Operations doctrine, and contemporary ARSOF manuals

when it emphasizes that the COCOMs will usually put SOF under TACON or a supported

relationship. The manual goes on to say that SOF are best when included in planning and when

executed under "SOF C2 elements employed intact, centralized, and fully responsive to the needs

of the supported commander."[35] It does, however, note on page v-15 that the exchange of LNOs

is paramount for "situational awareness and [to] facilitate staff planning and training for

integrated operations." Joint Publication 3-05 is specific in describing why Special Operations

Forces must have a SOF command and control structure and even lists the different types of C2

structures: all the different forms a TSOC can take.[36] Lastly, JP 3-05.1 takes a different tact, and

this might be reflected in its later date of publication than JP 3-05. Joint Publication 3-05.1

repeatedly emphasizes the need for integration during planning and execution and hints at

different C2 relationships and the utmost importance of LNOs. Repeatedly it stresses that the

mission should be the key and that command and control relationships should be constructed with

the mission in mind.[37]

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[33] U.S. Department of Defense, *Counterinsurgency*, by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-24, October 2009, IV-1.

[34] U.S. Department of Defense, *Unified Action Armed Forces,* by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 0-2, July 2001, vii:xvi, I-5:I-10, and III-1:III-14.

[35] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Operations,* by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-0, February 2008, II-3 and II-14:II-15.

[36] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Special Operations,* by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-05, December 2003, III-1:4 and III-10:11.

[37] Department of Defense, *JSOTF Operations*, by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-05.1, April 2007, I-4, II-1 and III-7:9.

ARSOF doctrine includes Field Manual (FM) 3-05 *Army Special Operations Forces* and

FM 3-05.137 *ARSOF Foreign Internal Defense* (FID) *Operations*. FM 3-05 and 3-05.137

explains how Army SOF are organized and controlled and their capabilities. With respect to

command and control and conventional forces integration, these two manuals focus on the need

for SOF to have an unambiguous C2 organization and that normally Special Operations Forces

are OPCON to SOF- usually through a Joint Special Operations Task Force. The only place

conventional forces integration is specifically mentioned is when the manuals suggest the JSOTF

send a SOCCE to a conventional forces Joint Task Force and although it suggests that the

SOCCE remain OPCON to the JSOTF, it ambiguously mentions that the JSOTF itself could be

subordinated to the JTF. Both manuals also state the need for command and control relationships

to depend on the mission and other important factors.[38]

Special Forces doctrine includes Field Manual (FM) 3-05.20 and 3-05.202. Field Manual

3-05.202 *Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense Operations* states nothing different from the

ARSOF manual on FID. Field Manual 3-05.20, however, goes into depth on command and

control and conventional force integration. Interestingly, the main difference between it and the

manual it replaced, FM 31-20, is that any references to conventional forces having control of SOF

are gone. For instance, 31-20 stated,

> The JSOTF may be under the OPCON of the supported area commander… The actual
> situation will dictate whether the SOC or conventional commander exercises OPCON of
> the supporting SF teams… The theater CINC passes OPCON of deployed SF teams to a
> conventional force commander when- the conventional force commander requests and
> receives dedicated SF support on a mission basis. the theater CINC commits the
> conventional force to an area in which SF operations are ongoing, the conventional force
> approaches a JSOA and linkup becomes imminent… When the area of operations of a
> conventional force commander encompasses a JSOA, the conventional force commander
> normally exercises OPCON through the collocated SOCCE.[39]

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[38] Department of Defense, *Army Special Operations Forces,* by the Commander, US Army Special
Operations Command, FM 3-05, September 2006, 4-1, 4-4, 4-7:8, 4-10, 4-13.

[39] Department of Defense, *Doctrine for Special Forces Operations,* by the Department of the
Army, FM 31-20, Washington, DC, April 1990, 5-2 and 5-19.

Field Manual 3-05.20, however, barely mentions command and control relationships between conventional forces and SOF. Under unity of command it states that there must be an "uncluttered chain of command" to achieve unity of effort, but then notes that SF is an exception requiring "coordination and cooperation" with other entities instead of "unity of command."[40] The manual does state that to achieve synchronization with conventional forces operations, SOF must utilize one of the many liaison elements that were already mentioned in this paper as being described in SOCOM's Publication 3-33: the Special Operations Coordination Element, Special Operations Command and Control Element, and Special Forces Liaison Elements. Lastly, the manual states that the reason Special Operations Forces should maintain command and control of SOF are that: "…unnecessary layering of HQ in the SF chain of command decreases responsiveness and threatens OPSEC…" and further states that the JFSOCC maintains OPCON of all SOF forces assigned or attached in theater.[41] The theme for this manual, written in 2001, could be taken as an anticipatory work that foresaw problems with conventional force command and control of SOF in counterinsurgency environments like that of Afghanistan. It predicts the problems that arose in 2003 and afterward when conventional forces did control SOF in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF).

Army doctrine as it relates to Special Operations Forces and conventional force interaction is mainly found in FM 3-0 *Operations* and FM 6-0 *Mission Command*. Of the two, FM 6-0 mainly explains the concepts of command and control. Field Manual 3-0 explains the importance of unity of effort and how to achieve it.[42] Interestingly, it mentions SOF in the same manner as it mentions the other armed forces services, as a "joint force."[43] The manual maintains

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[40] Department of Defense, *Special Forces Operations*, by the Department of the Army, FM 3-05.20, Washington DC, June 2001, 1-17.

[41] Ibid, 4-1:4-2, 4-6 and 4-10.

[42] Department of Defense, *Operations*, by the Department of the Army, FM 3-0, Washington DC, February 2008, 5-54, 6-32, 6-66, A-12.

[43] Ibid, 4-7.

that the command and control of SOF units is based on the specific mission and circumstances during each unique situation. Most interestingly, however, is the detail the manual goes into on how unified action frequently requires unity of effort instead of unity of command (because of unique C2 situations) and that consensus-building is perhaps the most important goal in attaining unity of effort.[44] The description of consensus-building on page A-3 would be beneficial to higher-level staffs of conventional forces and SOF units that do not have to interact through any formal requirements, but must interact due to co-location on the battlefield (which is the majority of the cases in Afghanistan).

Based on doctrinal sources, joint, service, and SOF doctrine all agree that unity of effort is important. Most agree that the preferred method for attaining unity of effort is through unity of command. Most also acknowledge that unity of command is not the standard, especially in a COIN environment. Joint doctrine, for the most part, stresses liaison officers (LNOs) and integration during planning and training in order to build unity of effort. Army Special Operations doctrine notes the importance of Special Operations Forces commanding SOF and offers LNOs and specifically the Special Operations Command and Control Element as a means to ensure unity of effort. It curiously does not spend much time discussing command and control relationships outside of internal SOF relationships. Army doctrine goes into a detailed discussion on building consensus as a way to achieve unity of effort, as if acknowledging the reality that conventional forces command of SOF is not the norm in the contemporary environment. The one overwhelmingly bright spot in doctrine is SOCOM Publication 3-33. It directly addresses the problems conventional forces and SOF have run into recently on the topic of unity of effort and ambiguous command relationships. It concludes that not only are LNO organizations the key, but also describes what they should look like, how they should perform, provides checklists for them to operate by, and insinuates the importance commanders should pay to them at all levels.

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[44] Department of Defense, *Operations*, by the Department of the Army, FM 3-0, Washington DC, February 2008, A-3.

Although it does address many recommendations on SOF and conventional forces interaction, the manual does not address the costs of these recommendations and alternative solutions.

This comprehensive literature review of military doctrine and congressional records signifies that the most important concept within military operations is unity of effort and that this does not necessarily mean unity of command. To achieve unity of effort in Afghanistan, Congress authorized (through Goldwater-Nichols legislation) USCENTCOM the authorization to command and control the units assigned to its theater. Congress also authorized (through the Nunn-Cohen amendment) CENTCOM to have a Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) in order to help command and control and plan for and monitor SOF. Doctrine has advised that to achieve unity of effort, the TSOC must weigh the unique situation every time SOF is deployed and arrive at a command and control relationship with conventional forces that best accomplishes the overall mission through unity of effort. Doctrine further states that regardless of the C2 relationship, SOF is best commanded and controlled by a SOF entity. Doctrine also states that, again regardless of the C2 structure, LNOs and LNO entities are the keys to establishing and maintaining unity of effort. With what would appear to be a clear playbook on how to achieve unity of effort, this paper will next address how the C2 relationship and the unity of effort (or lack thereof) developed within Afghanistan from 2001 to the present.

History of Command and Control of SOF in Afghanistan[45]

Immediately following 9/11

In the Aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, President George W. Bush ordered the military to deploy to Afghanistan and overthrow the government of

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[45] For an excellent history of SOF in Afghanistan, see USSOCOM's official history from 1987 to 2007 found on-line at: http://www.docstoc.com/docs/5791832/United-States-Special-Operations-Command-1987-2007, accessed on 25 October 2009.

the Taliban. The course of action approved by the Secretary of Defense was one that utilized

SOF in an Unconventional Warfare campaign. Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas,

or "A-teams," linked up with Afghan forces already fighting the Taliban government, provided

advisory functions to combine all the disparate efforts, and then led the irregular columns against

the Taliban government forces, supporting them with equipment, communications and Close Air

Support (CAS). The C2 framework for this operation, since it was a SOF-run operation, ran

directly from the CENTCOM Commander, General Tommy Franks, through Special Operations

Command Central (SOCCENT), to the Joint Special Operations Task Force that directly

controlled the SF teams on the ground.[46]

This structure and force package worked well until possibly the Battle of Tora Bora in

which many concluded the lack of conventional forces allowed Osama Bin Laden to escape into

Pakistan.[47] Not long after that, conventional force presence grew and eventually by 2002 an

assortment of task forces had descended upon Afghanistan and the Middle East to support a new

phase of the war that trended away from Special Operations and utilization of Afghan fighters.[48]

Central Command added several headquarters to SOCCENT's command and control element in

the region (the Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command, or "CFSOCC").

Specifically, CENTCOM added the Central Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) in

Kuwait, a Joint Task Force headed by the 10th Mountain Division (JTF Mountain) at Bagram that

controlled all conventional forces, and several Joint Special Operations Task Forces controlling

SOF in different regions of Afghanistan (one was in Kandahar, one operated in the East out of

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[46] Hastings, Michael D. Maj., U.S. Army, "Integration of conventional forces and Special Operations Forces" (MMAS thesis, CGSC, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2005), 2; Rhyne, Richard G., Maj., U.S. Army, "Special Forces Command and Control in Afghanistan", (MMAS thesis, CGSC, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2004), 38.

[47] Grossman, Elaine, "Was Operation Anaconda ill-fated from the Start?", *Inside the Pentagon*, 29 July 2004, 1.

[48] Naylor, 17-21.

Bagram, and one floated around the country).[49] This confusing C2 situation was best described

as ambiguous, however the official structure was one of CENTCOM commanding the CFLCC

and the CFSOCC, the CFLCC having Operational Control (OPCON) of JTF Mountain and

Tactical Control (TACON) of JSOTF Dagger (the JSOTF operating in the East out of Bagram),

and the CFSOCC having OPCON of the other two JSOTFs.[50] Many observers claimed the

resulting confusion came from the tactical confusion, lack of air cover, deaths of U.S. and allied-

Afghan fighters, and lack of situational awareness during Operation ANACONDA.[51]

After the perceived failure of at least the command and control situation during Operation

ANACONDA[52], two things happened that directly impacted the C2 situation and future direction

of the fight in Afghanistan: the political and military fallout from ANACONDA and preparations

for the invasion of Iraq. As conventional forces numbers in Afghanistan grew in the aftermath of

ANACONDA and the Battle at Tora Bora, conventional forces forces became the predominant

force in Afghanistan.[53] At the same time, SOCCENT was ordered to turn their attention to the

expected effort in Iraq.[54] This paved the way for Lieutenant General (LTG) McNeill, the 18th

Airborne Corps and JTF-180 (the new conventional forces' Joint Task Force in Afghanistan)

Commander to ask for and receive OPCON of the one consolidated JSOTF in Afghanistan. The

Joint Special Operations Task Force in Kandahar and the one in Bagram had been consolidated

into a Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force- Afghanistan, or CJSOTF-A; "combined"

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[49] Naylor, 17-21; McPherson, James A., LCDR US Navy, "Operation Anaconda: Command and Control through VTC", (thesis, Naval War College, Newport RI, 14 February 2005), 4-6.

[50] Naylor, 17-21; Hastings, 2; Grossman, 1.

[51] Naylor.

[52] An excellent read on the subject of Operation ANACONDA is Sean Naylor's book, *Not a Good Day to Die*. This book spells out clearly the confusing C2 situation in Afghanistan in 2002 and the resulting battle that was marked by a lack of coordination and clear C2 structure.

[53] Rhyne, Richard G., Maj., U.S. Army, "Special Forces Command and Control in Afghanistan", (MMAS thesis, CGSC, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2004), 43.

[54] Ibid, 45.

because it included foreign SOF.[55] Another key factor was the lack of experience of the

SOCCENT Commander who, being a Navy SEAL, arguably did not understand the requirements

of land-based ARSOF and especially SF in a COIN environment, and thus the need for SOF to

maintain OPCON of the CJSOTF.[56]

As world attention turned towards Iraq, so too did the attention of CENTCOM. The war

in Afghanistan turned into an "economy of force" effort wherein the Taliban was declared

destroyed and the priority became Iraq.[57] Meanwhile, as SOF was increasingly focused on

planning for Iraq, conventional forces were running the war in Afghanistan and increasing the

friction between the two forces. Many in SOF grew frustrated as LTG McNeill's JTF

headquarters staff officers attempted through trial and error to learn how to task, supply, and

utilize SOF. Conventional forces down to the battalion level were given OPCON of SOF units

for the duration of missions, usually placing SF companies with conventional forces battalions

and SF battalions with brigades. Conventional forces commanders, including LTG McNeill,

admitted to the difficulty in learning how to properly employ SOF.[58] Other factors that SOF and

conventional forces noted during this period was a concern about Operational Security

(specifically that SOF would not share information with conventional forces for fear of

compromise), differences in culture especially in the higher echelons, SF units being improperly

utilized, and the conventional forces propensity to want to task SOF as they would a subordinate

conventional forces unit.[59]

[55] Rhyne, Richard G., Maj., U.S. Army, "Special Forces Command and Control in Afghanistan", (MMAS thesis, CGSC, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2004), 23-45.

[56] Grossman, 1. She notes that Admiral Calland did not have a Grand Plan for operations as late as February 2002 and did not have a SOC HQ element for C2 (although the TSOC was the supported command) in the entire theater until mid-November of 2001. This failure to provide for an early structure and a plan for Afghanistan could have led to CF filling a vacuum that grew more serious as the rest of the military and CENTCOM began to gear up for Iraq.

[57] Votel, interview.

[58] Grossman, 1.

[59] Ramirez, Armando J., "From Bosnia to Baghdad: The Evolution of US Army Special Forces From 1995-2004", September 2004, Naval Postgraduate School Thesis, Monterey: 74.; Hastings, 6; Dyke,

In addition to these issues, SOF in Afghanistan had to rely on conventional force assets as they did not have an official command relationship with SOCCENT. The SOC's intelligence, communications, support, planning, and air were not available to the CJSOTF.[60] Some SOCCENT officers viewed the situation as one in which the CJTF had OPCON of SOF, but these forces were not fully enabled Special Operations Forces because of the lack of TSOC support. Because of this, SOCCENT repeatedly tried between 2002 and 2004 to regain control of the CJSOTF. The commander of CENTCOM told SOCCENT to ask the CJTF to change the C2 relationship, but the conventional forces commander at the time would not hear of it.[61] During this timeframe, the CJTF attempted to give SOF units control of Areas of Operation (AOs). Since Special Operations Forces have few assets that actually facilitate the occupation of space on the battlefield, this was an issue and eventually the JSOTF was successful in turning down that order. In 2005, one-third of the JSOTF's forces were actually placed back under the control of SOCCENT for greater theater purposes. This arrangement gave the TSOC and CENTCOM greater flexibility in the use of SOF and taking the entire CENTCOM theater into consideration. Between Brigadier General (BG) Kearney and Colonel (COL) Haas, the SOCCENT Commander and JSOTF Commander respectively, in 2006 SOCCENT regained OPCON of the CJSOTF.

John R. and Crisafulli, John R., "Unconventional Counter-Insurgency in Afghanistan", (Naval Postgraduate School thesis, Monterey, June 2006), 9; Rhyne, Richard G, 23, 60. Mitchell, correspondence.

[60] Turner, interview. Brig. Gen. Michael S. Repass, interview by author, September 11, 2009. Higgins, interview. Mitchell, correspondence. Brig. Gen. Repass' opinion was that the more important point was how SOF were employed by the TSOC as opposed to supported, and that if SOF is OPCON to CF they are bound by CF restrictions both in terms of the Area of Operation and in type of operations. Thus, SOF, which views itself as a theater-level force that deploys where needed and provides coverage across the seams between CF units and that is not bound by CF restrictions would necessarily become limited in its usefulness if placed under CF control. Brig. Gen. Higgins emphasized the long-term planning and synchronization that the TSOC can support at the higher levels: when SOF lose that link they are effectively having to come up with higher-level plans and coordination on their own from inside whatever country they are operating in. Col. Mitchell added that what is lost is the link to a C2 organization that understands how to employ SOF.

[61] Higgins, interview; Mitchell correspondence; Turner, interview.

Efforts to turn Afghanistan over to NATO and changes in personnel allowed an opportunity for

SOCCENT to regain OPCON of SOF after having turned its attention to Iraq.[62]

After 2006 (ISAF and NATO take-over)

At the end of 2006, the American command structure in Afghanistan began to prepare to

hand over much of the responsibility for Afghanistan to the International Security Assistance

Force (ISAF), a NATO HQ. In anticipation of this handover, the command and control structure

of SOF would have to change. The first reason was that many NATO member nations deploying

troops in support of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan were signing up solely for peacekeeping

missions. Some NATO forces, including foreign SOF, were relegated to training Afghan forces

and building local capacity. This was juxtaposed by U.S. efforts, especially U.S. SOF efforts,

which included hunting Taliban and Al-Qaida leadership and insurgents. For political reasons,

putting U.S. SOF under a separate command and control arrangement made sense, since many

NATO nations wanted to stay away from more aggressive types of missions.[63]

Another reason to separate SOF from conventional forces was that the Bush

administration did not want to hamstring its primary effort of hunting terrorists by putting SOF

under a NATO C2 structure that could possibly place prohibitions upon their efforts. For

instance, ISAF handled captured insurgents differently than U.S. SOF handled them. In addition,

NATO and U.S. commands were developing very restrictive Rules of Engagement (ROE) that

U.S. SOF argued should not apply to them, especially given their primary focus: killing or

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[62] Higgins, interview; Mitchell correspondence; Turner, interview.

[63] Col. Patrick Mahaney, interview by author, July 10, 2008; Col. Mark Strong, interview by author, July 10, 2008. All references to SOF C2 in this section reflect the author's personal experiences as an LNO between CJTF-82 and CJSOTF-A in 2007, to include numerous conversations with staff officers and commanders on this subject.

capturing high value insurgents.[64] Lastly, many in SOF had been chafing under the control of the

CJTF and wanted to take their direction directly from the CFSOCC.[65]

In the end, CENTCOM established a compromise. For all the reasons mentioned above,

in 2006 the CFSOCC regained OPCON over SOF in Afghanistan. The International Security

Assistance Force now "*Operationally Commanded*" (OPCOM: a NATO term similar to OPCON)

the U.S. conventional force Joint Task Force at Bagram Airbase and all U.S. conventional forces

wore an ISAF patch on their shoulders. The CJSOTF-A forces, however, were under *TACON for*

Foreign Internal Defense (FID) to the CJTF.[66] This designation caused confusion as different SF

Groups defined their efforts in Afghanistan differently. Some officers in 7th SF Group defined

their FID efforts as training the Afghan commandos, which were only taking place at one location

and involved one Operational Detachment-Bravo (SF company-size unit) and one Operational

Detachment-Alpha (ODA). All other efforts were either described as "Combat FID" or

"Unconventional Warfare" (UW). Some officers in 3rd SF Group described their efforts in the

entire country as "FID." Since the SF Groups rotated into country on a different schedule than

the conventional forces units, this caused frustration on the conventional force side as C2

relationships changed multiple times during their deployment, based on different definitions of

the CJSOTF-A mission by some in each Group.[67]

Perhaps the most serious issue with the new relationship rested in the realm of long-term

planning. Since TACON only applies to the movement and use of forces, it was difficult for the

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[64] Author's observation in Afghanistan in 2007.

[65] Mitchell, correspondence; Turner, interview; Higgins, interview.

[66] Lt. Col. Thomas Sheehan, interview by author, July 10, 2008. Author's observation in
Afghanistan in 2007.

[67] Observed by author when 3rd SFG(A) replaced 7th SFG(A) in late 2007. The 7th and 3rd SF
Groups deployed for approximately 7 months at a time, switching out with each other, whereas the CF units
were deployed for 12-15 months at a time and were not rotating back into country like the SF Groups. In
addition, not only were there different definitions of the C2 relationship between the Groups, there were
also differing definitions *within* the Groups. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that this was one Group's
position at the time, however the key officers interacting with the CJTF did hold differing views of the C2
structure and the descriptions of which ODAs were doing FID and which were not.

conventional forces units tasked to develop operational plans to support ISAF's campaign plan to gain SOF input for their region.[68] For instance, CJTF-82, the Regional Command-East (RC-E) headquarters responsible for the U.S. sector in Afghanistan, worked for months on the RC-E slice of the ISAF campaign plan. For the first few weeks of the planning, the CJSOTF-A LNO attended the planning sessions regularly. Unfortunately, the LNO was an individual augmentee who was filling a position on the Joint Manning Document (JMD), as opposed to a full-fledged member of the SF unit that made up most of the CJSOTF-A. As such, the LNO was not privy to most of what the CJSOTF-A was currently doing nor what they had planned. In addition, because the LNO had no authority to represent the CJSOTF-A (the LNO was only tasked to pass information- and only information approved for release), the LNO was eventually told by the CJSOTF-A to stop attending the planning sessions. This might have been a moot point, since the LNO was unable to contribute much to the planning sessions anyway.[69]

At this point, it could be assumed that coordination between ISAF and the CJSOTF-A was on-going in Kabul on the campaign plan. However, the RC-E portion of the campaign plan was not coordinated between the two headquarters at the CJTF level during 2007. One point that must be made is that the CJSOTF-A, although containing future plans officers, probably saw itself more as an ISAF-level entity anyway, since it controlled units all over the country, in all four regions. CJTF-82 only controlled units in RC-E, one region. One might argue that maybe the Special Operations Task Force co-located at Bagram with the CJTF and the CJSOTF could have sent planners to the meetings, but this was also a similar issue since the Special Operations Task Force (SOTF- usually a SOF battalion headquarters) operated in two regions, as opposed to only RC-E. The SOTF also busied itself with daily operations and arguably could not have

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[68] TACON, or "Tactical Control" is a C2 term that authorizes a higher HQ to dictate where and what subordinate units will do. This is juxtaposed with OPCON or "Operational Control", which authorizes a higher HQ to dictate *how* a unit will accomplish a mission.

[69] Observed by author in 2007. The LNO at the time did not have access to the commanders of either organization and was not trusted with details on upcoming operations.

supported authoritative personnel on such a frequent basis to attend planning sessions. Since

there really was no SOF unit geographically assigned only to RC-E, it remains to be seen what

the correct, doctrinal or even pragmatic solution should have been in this instance. Arguably,

things were made worse because CFSOCC had only recently begun working on a campaign plan

of their own for Afghanistan, but since neither CENTCOM nor ISAF at that time had one

themselves, whether CFSOCC had one or not may have made no difference.[70] That Iraq was the

focus of the combatant command and its subordinate commands could have contributed to the

overall lackadaisical attitude towards Afghanistan that concerned and frustrated NATO and

manifested itself in the lack of synchronization at the top and thus magnified the command and

control ambiguity.[71]

Today

One wonders if the lack of focus, the confusing C2 structure, the frustration of the NATO

member-states, and a new administration all combined to usher in the change that has come with

the new Afghanistan Commander, General McChrystal in 2009. The replacement of the top

commander in Afghanistan and the obvious moves to make Afghanistan the priority have also

ushered in change for SOF command and control.[72] In 2009, SOCCENT established CFSOCC-A

in Afghanistan commanded by a SOF Brigadier General. Its mission is to coordinate with ISAF

and handle the long-range planning for Afghanistan, freeing up the CJSOTF to manage day-to-

day operations. This move also may ensure that full control of the CJSOTF-A is maintained by

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[70] Lt. Gen. Francis H. Kearney , e-mail correspondence to the author, September 29, 2009; Votel, interview; Maj. Patrick M. Pascall, interview by author, August 3, 2009.

[71] Hope, Ian Col., "Unity of Command: A Forsaken Principle of War", NOV 2008, Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle: 15-19.

[72] Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Cell (PACC) (briefing given to the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS, September 1, 2009).

SOF, since GEN McChrystal, the new ISAF commander, released a list of priorities to the Joint Staff that listed "re-looking" SOF C2 as number six.[73]

Future

Special Operations Forces command and control in Afghanistan is in a state of flux. SOCCENT has set up a new, one-star command in order to participate fully with ISAF on the way ahead in Afghanistan and retain OPCON of SOF. Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan, or CFSOCC-A, interacts with ISAF and ensures SOF and conventional forces operations are coordinated and long-term plans are synchronized.[74] Currently, the CJSOTF-A focuses on daily operations and is able to rely on a higher headquarters to not only synchronize future plans and communicate with conventional forces forces at the higher headquarters levels on its behalf, but who is also in-country and focused on Afghanistan.[75] How this will affect the U.S. conventional force Joint Task Force in Regional Command- East is too early to tell. Is the new structure in place helping the JTF in RC-East (and the other JTFs in the other RCs) perform their daily operational requirements or is it confusing things and upsetting the synchronization of long-term plans for the region? The answer most likely lies with the same factors that made or broke efforts in the past: personalities and the quality and authority of LNOs. The questions the next section will attempt to answer are: *can CENTCOM set-up a C2 structure to overcome the overreliance on personalities that characterizes the current system*; and, if not,

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[73] Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Cell (PACC) (briefing given to the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS, September 1, 2009)..

[74] According to Gen. McChrystal's testimony to Congress, ISAF has no formal relationship with CFSOCC-A, however as the commander of U.S. Forces (COMUSFOR) in Afghanistan, he does have TACON of the CFSOCC-A. This relationship, however, only applies when a U.S. commander is in command of ISAF, at other times it would revert to the RC-East Commander- the next highest U.S. forces commander. In addition, Gen. McChrystal's response further qualifies the statement of TACON being one of coordinating SOF's FID activities, which may imply that CFSOCC-A is TACON for FID to USFOR-A, which would be the same relationship the CJTF had in 2007 with the CJSOTF (http://armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2009/June/McChrystal%2006-02-09.pdf).

[75] Higgins, interview; Maxwell, interview.

what changes can conventional forces and SOF make that could contribute to greater unity of effort?

Problems with Current/Past Systems

Problems with synchronizing operations and future plans

One of the more serious problems that can result from confusing C2 relationships is its effect on strategic objectives and plans. For every separate entity that is not synchronized at some level by a shared campaign plan, the greater the risk that strategic objectives will either be different or unreachable. For instance, if a conventional forces unit is attempting to build capacity in an area and part of that effort is to build trust, imagine the disruption to that effort if a SOF unit conducts a raid at the same time a conventional forces unit is holding a meeting with local leaders. If SOF does not communicate to the conventional force unit about the raid and, worse, the SOF raid results in collateral damage, the conventional forces unit's efforts may be seriously undermined. Multiply that scenario dozens of times across a region and one possible result would be the conventional forces JTF's inability to reach any of its operational objectives in the area. Beyond that type of "emergent" operational conflict, the other type of conflict that could exist is one wherein commands do not synchronize their plans. Multiple SOF and conventional forces officers interviewed for this monograph noted times when SOF refused to participate in briefings and planning meetings for various reasons, usually in an attempt to evade the possibility of a growing conventional forces requirement on SOF headquarters personnel or a perceived move to gain more formal influence over SOF operations.[76]

Regardless of whether or not SOF were ever justified in refusing to take part in planning activities at the JTF level, the result could be two forces working at cross-purposes to one another

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[76] Sheehan, interview; as observed by the author in 2007.

in the same Area of Operations (AO). Officers interviewed for this monograph noted the lack of

a SOCCENT or CENTCOM viable campaign plan to guide the units on the ground either because

they had not seen one or because they knew that a "robust enough" plan did not exist.[77]

CENTCOM for most of the last seven years has been focused on Iraq and because Afghanistan

increasingly has turned into a NATO effort it is understandable that CENTCOM and its

subordinate commands did not prepare a campaign plan that would synchronize all the disparate

elements. Since prior to 2002 and after 2006 the CJSOTF was not OPCON to the CJTF, it would

follow that the synchronizing of plans was happening at a higher level, either between the

CFSOCC and CFLCC (prior to 2002) or between the CFSOCC and ISAF (after 2006).

Depending on who is asked and what the timeframe is, either the CJSOTF or the CFSOCC

synchronized plans with ISAF from 2006 on. It is this author's opinion that this synchronization

is best accomplished between headquarters that are actually in Afghanistan. One reason this did

not always happen at the ISAF level was the notion that ISAF forces operated under a different

mission set and with different Rules of Engagement (ROE). Thus, ISAF had different objectives

than SOF and it could not be the level at which plans were synchronized, this had to occur at the

lowest level at which operational and/or strategic objectives were the same.[78]

Thus, it is very likely that one of the major problems with the situation in Afghanistan was a

lack of unity of effort due to two sets of forces acting towards disparate objectives, both

purposefully at the strategic planning level and accidentally at the operational and tactical levels,

as units carried out their activities on the ground. There are plenty of signs that this indeed did

happen. One sign was the deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2009. Other

signs are alluded to in the following subsections: mistrust and misunderstanding between the

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[77] Kearney, interview; Votel, interview; Sheehan, interview; Pascall, interview; Mitchell, interview; Higgins, interview. Turner, interview.

[78] Strong, interview; Sheehan , interview; Mahaney, interview. Both Colonels Mahaney and Strong noted that SOF had different objectives and ROE than CF in Afghanistan. Many officers posited that CENTCOM was the lowest level at which the objective were the same.

forces, bureaucratic systems that stifled timely support, SOF lacking capability due to a lack of

formal ties to the CFSOCC (or through being bound by conventional force restrictions),

conventional forces lacking experience in the employment of SOF, and the high degree that

cooperation depended on personalities being in the right positions at the right times.

Problems with mistrust and misunderstanding

A second problem resulting more from culture and past history, but one that is

exacerbated by the current system, is the problem of mistrust and misunderstanding between SOF

and conventional forces.[79] Special Operations soldiers tend to mistrust conventional soldiers and

conventional forces commanders. This mistrust stems from the youth and lack of experience of

conventional forces soldiers relative to SOF soldiers who are usually mid to senior Non-

Commissioned Officers (NCOs). At the higher levels this problem stems from conventional

forces commanders and senior enlisted advisers attempting to employ SOF incorrectly or trying

to instill disciplinary measures on SOF that to Special Operators are more appropriate for privates

in garrison but make little sense for senior NCOs in a war zone.[80] Collectively, this mistrust can

be negated or exacerbated by the command and control structures in place and/or the personalities

in place.[81]

Misunderstanding comes from a lack of knowledge on the part of both conventional

forces and SOF on each other's capabilities, limitations, and how each goes about employing

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[79] Horn, Bernd, Colonel, Canadian Army, "When Cultures Collide: The conventional Military/SOF Chasm", *Canadian Military Journal*, 7, no. 1. (Autumn 2004), 3-16; Mitchell, correspondence; Higgins, interview. Brig. Gen. Higgins described the relationship as one of friction more than one of mistrust, but noted that at the CJSOTF level in 2004 the personalities were such that there was a good overall relationship.

[80] As observed by the author; Mitchell, correspondence; Higgins, interview.

[81] For instance, if the C2 structure is SOF OPCON to CF and there is mistrust between CF and SOF, then personality issues can exacerbate the problems that are inherent in CF having OPCON of SOF. On the other hand, if there is trust between SOF and CF, then the C2 structure can be worked around as opposed to being an obstacle to cooperation and this can come from a positive alignment of personalities in the right positions.

force to accomplish its missions. Since 1987, SOF has come into its own with its own Command and its relative separation from the conventional side and has taken on many aspects of a separate service in the way that Congress empowered SOCOM to act as such. SOF personnel, especially since 11 September 2001, tend to have less time in conventional forces units and have little to no contact with conventional forces outside of the times they meet on the battlefield and conduct a mission together.[82] Many conventional commanders, although coming a long way since DESERT STORM, still to some degree doubt whether or not SOF is worth the money and sacrifices DoD has had to make since the Nunn-Cohen Act to accommodate them.[83] In the past SOF strove to get conventional forces to employ them.[84] Now that there is more work to go around than forces, it would seem that much of SOF may have forgotten the decades of work it took to overcome the reluctance of conventional forces and the mistrust they had in order to employ SOF.[85]

The mistrust on the conventional forces side comes from the SOF tendency to not share information, both on upcoming operations and general intelligence.[86] In SOF's view, protection of sources is paramount and the only thing more sacred is the details on upcoming operations.[87] SOF units usually rely on surprise to make up for their lack of numbers and firepower.[88] Thus, if a mission is compromised, more is at stake than simply the enemy getting away, soldiers' lives are put in great danger. Normally, SOF preferences for information sharing are that less is

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[82] Experience of author since 2001.

[83] Tucker, David and Lamb, Christopher J., *United States Special Operations Forces*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 85.

[84] Smith, Michael, *Killer Elite*, (NY: St. Martin's Press, 2006), 169.

[85] As observed by the author since 2001.

[86] McRaven, William H., *SpecOps: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare Theory and Practice*, (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1995), 4-28.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

better.[89] This can lead to conventional forces either not trusting SOF due to this insular behavior or, worse, a lack of coordination at the ground level that leads to operations working at cross-purposes. Much of this mistrust on the conventional side can be explained by a misunderstanding between conventional forces and SOF and their respective limitations and roles.[90]

From the conventional force perspective, few training opportunities exist for conventional forces to train with SOF. Although many SOF and conventional force units are co-located in the U.S., most training between them is the result of one of three possibilities. Either personalities stay mission-focused, former relationships overcome present SOF-conventional forces walls of separation, or top-down pressure prior to a deployment force units to train together. Not having worked at the lower levels of SOF, nor having the experience of commanding and controlling SOF, most conventional forces HQ staffers would have a hard time employing and supporting Special Operations. This misunderstanding also carries over into the realm of standards of discipline. Many SOF could not understand the conventional forces fixation of tight standards of discipline in a war zone. Most SOF viewed the mission as paramount and that discipline was what kept you alive and manifested itself on the battlefield. On the bases around Afghanistan, conventional forces attempted to keep young soldiers in check and from doing something serious enough to either make front-page news and start a riot or causing a general breakdown in disorder. This resulted in conventional forces constantly complaining to SOF about haircuts, beards, uniforms, reflector belts, and saluting, to name a few of the issues in contention between the forces.[91]

The mistrust and misunderstanding on each side was exacerbated under the confusing command and control structures in place between SOF and conventional forces. Thus, without strong personalities at every level to overcome these, they could manifest themselves in

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[89] Hastings, 64.

[90] Mitchell, correspondence, Higgins, interview. As observed by the author in 2007.

[91] Higgins, interview. As observed by the author since 2001.

communication breakdowns. Although a possible outcome frequently was seen on the ground as a gap in support for units, the more serious product of the breakdown in communication was the lack of synchronization for operations and strategy between the in-country headquarters.

Process for securing support

Another problem that stems directly from the C2 environment is one of support. When SOF is OPCON to the TSOC there may be a challenge in getting support from the CJTF. This can stem from personality conflicts and conventional forces lack of OPCON of SOF (and thus conventional forces not prioritizing support for SOF unless priorities of the two happen to match).[92] Likewise, when SOF is OPCON to conventional forces, the robust SOF support that a TSOC provides for SOF is difficult to obtain.[93] Each of these situations should be understood by both conventional forces and SOF, as one could conclude that the solution to most unity of effort problems of giving OPCON of SOF to the JTF or even the TSOC will not solve all problems. During the period between 2003 and 2006 when CJSOTF-A was OPCON to the JTF, SOF was heavily reliant on conventional forces for support. This meant that airlift support, indirect fire support, intelligence support and more had to come from conventional forces. SOF lost out on the robust support available from SOCCENT, which offered higher-level assets that conventional forces did not normally have access to. In addition, many conventional forces assets are not tailored for SOF, such as airlift, and thus even when SOF was able to get conventional forces support their capabilities were decremented.[94]

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[92] As observed by author in 2007.

[93] Turner, interview; Higgins, interview.; Mitchell, interview; Repass, interview. As noted before, this support can stem from simply knowing how to employ SOF and providing long-term planning and synchronization capability to more direct support such as air, intelligence platforms, etc.

[94] As noted before, others have argued that the greater issue is the restrictions that SOF would fall under when placed under CF control.

In contrast, after 2006 the CJSOTF-A was again OPCON to the TSOC, assets in Afghanistan that belonged to the JTF were sometimes very hard to get.[95] Although personalities sometimes could make support easier (or more difficult), coordinating to obtain support for airlift and operations in conventional force-owned areas in theory should not have been as easy as when the JTF had OPCON (and thus the responsibility to support) of SOF.[96] When personalities did make things worse in general for the CJSOTF and the only way to get support was through the JTF, the CJSOTF had to abide by the JTF's administrative processes and requirements for requesting support.[97] It is arguable whether being OPCON to the JTF would have resulted in different processes and requirements, but some might argue that a JTF-approved SOF mission would have received the necessary support from JTF-owned units. What is apparent from these two examples is that regardless of who has OPCON of the CJSOTF it would not have solved the problem of SOF providing the Joint Task Force with the most capabilities SOF has to offer. Neither would it have solved the issue of Special Operations Forces having to operate under the restrictions of the controlling unit, in this case the CJTF. This could manifest itself in terms of where SOF was able to operate, what they were able to do, how they were able to handle detainees, and how they were able to support the theater commander in other areas.[98]

Conventional forces lack of experience with C2 of SOF

Every SOF officer interviewed for this monograph noted the lack of conventional force experience with the command and control of Special Operations Forces.[99] Special Operations Forces offers an economy of force capability to the joint fight and conventional forces in

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[95] As observed by the author in 2007.

[96] In reality personalities made this issue moot- the C2 arrangement was less important for support.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Repass, interview. Turner, interview. Observations by the author in 2007.

[99] Repass, interview. Additionally, see bibliography for a list of SOF officers interviewed for this paper.

particular.[100] Special Forces soldiers, as one example and because they make up the preponderance of CJSOTF forces and SOF in general, are ill-suited to be given control of a large Area of Operations (AO) for any extended timeframe due to the lack of robust support, personnel, and other requirements needed to hold ground. In addition, their specialized capabilities are wasted when given tasks such as guarding a bridge or conducting a general reconnaissance. When the JTF had OPCON of the CJSOTF from 2002 to 2006, the tasks given to SOF detailed not only what the JTF wanted accomplished but often what kind of force structure they wanted and how they wanted SOF to accomplish the mission.[101] As SOF is sometimes compared to "Joint Fires,"[102] SOF could be easier to understand if it was seen as the same as requesting air support: conventional forces would preferably request an effect and SOF would determine and field the necessary force package to accomplish the effect.[103]

Joint Task Force-180 admitted that they were ill-suited for commanding and controlling SOF and had to learn by "trial and error".[104] Beyond a lack of experience by conventional forces, SOF culture is a bottom-up culture, especially in the manner that the CJSOTF-A operates wherein SF ODAs and other SOF small units are given broad guidance and then are allowed to develop their own missions based on the situation on the ground. When a larger operation is conceived by higher HQ, the smaller units usually plan how they will accomplish their part of the mission. Higher SOF HQ today normally exist to provide these smaller units the support they need to do their missions, as a coordination element with conventional forces, and as a mechanism for synchronizing all SOF activity within the overall operational and strategic plans of the theater or

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[100] Department of Defense, "Shaping Tomorrow's SOF", *Special Operations Statement 2000,* by the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, , USSOCOM, 2000, 36.

[101] Turner, interview.

[102] Department of Defense, *Joint Forces Land Component Command Handbook* , by the Joint Forces Land Component Command, FM 3-31*,* Appendix H.

[103] Repass, interview.

[104] Rhyne, 23, 60.

area of operations.[105] The latitude given to most SOF small units, therefore, is very difficult for conventional staffs to understand and take advantage. Even were they to understand the need for it, since it runs counter to conventional forces culture and to the processes and procedures conventional forces JTF's have established, it is doubtful they would even be able to take advantage of it.[106] Thus, SOF units placed under OPCON to a conventional forces unit are further marginalized and run the danger of being employed as little more than squads of infantry.

Restrictions

Perhaps the greatest issue with conventional forces having OPCON of Special Operations Forces remains the restrictions this places on SOF. Special Operations Forces operate where needed and do not usually limit themselves by arbitrary or artificial boundaries. In addition, SOF, when OPCON to a TSOC, are not restricted by a conventional unit's Rules of Engagement, detainee handling regulations, political restrictions (in the case of NATO member countries), what kinds of missions the conventional force is comfortable with, what kinds of operations they can resource, and the kinds of capabilities that the conventional force is aware of SOF performing. In short, although the conventional forces commander may not see these restrictions having an immediate effect on his operations, the greater effect would be at the ISAF level wherein SOF is not providing a bridge across seams.[107] In addition, problems with resourcing SOF elements at the BCT and below level become exponentially greater until this becomes a burden rather than a boon to unity of effort (the amount of detailed planning and support for even

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[105] Observation by author in 2007.

[106] CF culture, although changing in 2009, is historically one of "top-down" processes and procedures wherein BCTs and even Divisions come up with plans and even intelligence analysis conclusions and these result in operational ideas flowing down from the HQs as opposed to coming from the platoons and companies on the ground. The changes recently noted are those expounded upon at the 2009 Association of the U.S. Army's annual convention that are attempting to prepare CF for more asymmetrical-types of conflict wherein information and ideas should flow up from the lower units. This has also been expanded upon in developing doctrine.

[107] The seams in this case mainly being the Regional Commands (RCs), but also the AOs of different units within the RCs.

ODAs becomes a burden on conventional forces headquarters, since they are not manned or experienced to provide such support).[108]

Personalities

The last problem that either results from or is made worse by the current and past command and control relationships is that of personalities. One theme that not only permeated every discussion the author had with officers during research for this monograph but also SOCOM's publications on SOF and conventional forces interaction was the role that personalities played in overcoming or creating problems. Bad personalities can make the best C2 structure worthless. Likewise, good personalities can overcome the worst command and control relationship, although that is obviously not the preferred method. What is clear, however, is that a poorly defined C2 relationship can empower bad personalities to make things worse. Since personality compatibility of commanders is not a criterion of unit employment, there is an argument that a "better" C2 relationship could facilitate more preferable working relationships.[109]

Because there are no hard and fast rules for SOF and conventional forces training and operating relationships, much today that deals with SOF and conventional forces interaction reduces to personal relationships. If a commander thinks it is important to have units that will work together overseas train together prior to deploying, then he will make it happen. If a commander thinks it is important to designate the right people as LNOs to other units, then he will coordinate and accomplish this. Lastly, if a commander thinks the conventional forces-SOF working relationship is important, then that commander will make sure that rapport develops between the units.[110]

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[108] Col. David Maxwell, interview by author, September 18, 2009; Repass, interview.

[109] Sheehan, interview.

[110] Assuming that nothing gets in the way of making these things happen, such as rotational schedules, short amount of time between deployments, additional operations, taskings, and other unforeseen circumstances.

As the importance of the personality issue became apparent during interviews, it became important to define how command and control relationships affect personalities and how these personalities can, in turn, affect the attainment of strategic and operational goals and subordinate units' attainment of mission success and the support they require to complete their missions. However, it is perhaps more effective to offer the reader an example of what could happen, regardless of C2, when personalities match up correctly. Prior to deployment, two commanders who have worked together before- an SF Group commander and a conventional Division commander- decided they needed to train together prior to deploying. The SF Group and the Division staffs held weekly coordination meetings in order to plan future operations and share information. The two staffs worked out a tentative location plan for their respective units. Commanders instructed those units that will co-locate to link-up and the units are selected in part based on their commander's personalities. Units slated to conduct collective training or Training Center rotations trained at least part of the time with their "partnered units". During the Division's Mission Readiness Exercise (MRX), the SF Group's staff played an important role by participating in VTCs, planning meetings, and exchanging LNOs. Commanders identified LNOs prior to deployment and were incorporated into HQ train-ups. Once the units deployed, and the Special Forces Group commander became the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force commander and the Division commander became the Joint Task Force commander, the two commanders based their relationship on a mutual understanding of the situation and revisited it periodically to make sure it did not need to be modified based on changing conditions. In conclusion, regardless of the C2 relationship, personalities conducive to working together can make all the difference.[111]

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[111] Sheehan, interview. Partly based on 7th SFG(A)'s support of the 82nd Airborne Division's MRX and pre-deployment training in 2006, the close working relationship between 4th BCT and the SF ODB in RC-East during 2007, and 3rd SFG(A)'s emphasis on staff relations in 2007 as observed by the author.

Potential Solutions

Command and Control status

Obviously the most talked-about solution to ambiguous command and control situations is to change them. However, it is worth noting that bad personalities can destroy even the "best" C2 relationship. Some have suggested giving the US CJTF in Bagram OPCON of the CJSOTF.[112] As the JTF is only responsible for RC-East, however, this solution is problematic. The other Regional Commanders in Afghanistan would have problems with the U.S. Joint Task Force re-assigning SOF outside of their regions. Another option, putting the CJSOTF under ISAF, the NATO command in Kabul, results in the aforementioned problem of cutting the important link between the CJSOTF's forces and the support that SOCCENT offers. Now that there is a CFSOCC in Afghanistan, an arrangement that puts SOF TACOM (a NATO term that is comparable to TACON) to ISAF may work. It would still allow the CJSOTF (through the CFSOCC) to receive support from SOCCENT and thus provide ISAF with as robust a SOF package as possible, however SOF would most likely not offer as robust a package as possible to conventional forces as ISAF Rules of Engagement would then apply to SOF. What is less clear is whether a new arrangement like that would limit the activities SOF would be engaged in and whether ISAF would, or in the future could, divide up SOF by region and allow the RC Commanders to decide where they are best utilized, again restricting SOF to boundaries.

In addition to the traditional OPCON/TACON relationships, there is the SOF-preferred supported/supporting relationship and the joint term of "mutually supporting." Supported/supporting relationships are much more flexible and allow the commander to tailor forces' command and control structures as necessary to best accomplish a specific mission. As 3-33 describes it:

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[112] CJTF-82 staff personnel as observed by the author in 2007.

A support arrangement is established when an organization should aid, protect, complement, or sustain another force. Support relationships afford an effective means to weigh and ensure unity of effort for various operations. Support is also a flexible command authority relationship. The commander of the supported force will have the authority to exercise general direction of the supporting effort, to include target / objective prioritization, timing and duration of the supporting action, and coordination measures.[113]

The other command and control relationship that exists is what joint doctrine terms the "mutually supporting" relationship, some commanders refer to it in the slang term of "hand-shake-con." In layman's terms, mutual support is a relationship wherein the support different forces give and receive at any one time is based on three things: assigned tasks, position relative to each other and the enemy, and inherent capabilities.[114] GEN Anthony Zinni, former commander of USCENTCOM and Department of State representative to the Middle East, is quoted in FM 3-24 as describing hand-shake-con as figuring it out on the fly:

> …relationships are worked out on the scene, and they aren't pretty. And you don't really want to try to capture them,…distill them, and say as you go off in the future, you're going to have this sort of command relationship…[I]t is Hand Shake Con and that's the way it works. It is consultative. It is behind-the-scene.[115]

These command and control relationships are increasingly used in the contemporary environment of coalition and interagency operations and it may make sense that the most effective way to bring SOF and conventional forces together on the battlefield and get the most capability out of them is to utilize these flexible types of structures.

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[113] U.S. Department of Defense, *Conventional Forces and Special Operations Forces Integration and Interoperability Handbook and Checklist*, by the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, Publication 3-33, September 2006, 2-1:2-4.

[114] U.S. Department of Defense, *Unified Action Armed Forces,* by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 0-2, July 2001, III-10.

[115] U.S. Army, *Counterinsurgency*, by the Commander, TRADOC, Field Manual 3-24, 2006, 2-13.

Campaign plan synchronization

One option, that was the case from 2006 until recently, is for a SOCCENT-led development of a campaign plan. This plan should be synched with CENTCOM and ISAF and should be developed along with the CFSOCC-A and the theater CFSOCC in Qatar. This would make sure that the CJSOTF's operations are synchronized with the conventional force's effort. At this point, as in the past, what may be missing is the conventional force piece, in this instance the ISAF plan. That CFSOCC now has a plan while ISAF does not have a fully developed plan may mean that the SOF plan and operations are not nested within the overall conventional force effort.

In the past this solution could have been simply for SOCCENT to ensure that SOF had a campaign plan- regardless of the command and control relationship. Then the CJSOTF and SOCCENT could have lobbied CENTCOM to develop their own plan so that SOF was nested with something. Even a shell plan that was not as robust as necessary could have been given as a prod to CENTCOM and conventional forces in Afghanistan.

In the future, ISAF, CENTCOM, and NATO must ensure that a robust campaign plan exists and that SOF are nested, within that campaign plan and supporting all major objectives. SOCCENT, now that they have OPCON over SOF in Afghanistan, can more effectively ensure that SOF are nested and that they are synchronized across unit rotations. In order for SOCCENT to ensure they are nested they must ensure the new CFSOCC-A is engaged in an intimate way with ISAF.

Personality match-up/selection

Another option would be to ensure that personalities in key positions are suitable for the type of work demanded, most notably LNOs, but also some staff positions. This would require SOCOM and the TSOCs to push this as a priority to SOF commanders, and SOCOM would have to seek feedback from conventional forces as well as allow changes to be made (SOCOM to

ensure doctrine and training reflect this priority, the TSOCs to ensure the priority is met on deployment). So, for instance, if a conventional forces unit informs a TSOC that an LNO or a SOCCE commander is not working out with their paired conventional forces unit, the commander can replace that person. Currently it is more of a commander-driven issue that stifles change unless there is a terrible and obvious situation.[116] Making this more of an internal change that doesn't reflect on future command potential, but still a high priority (such that commanders would not want the wrong person in the "right" position), would allow commanders the flexibility to make sure the structure works as opposed to the organizations having to adjust to a rigid structure.[117]

The main argument against those points is the across-the-board agreement on the importance of personalities. Every officer interviewed for this paper agreed that the number one measure of successful interaction between SOF and conventional forces was the personalities involved from the commanders on down to the LNOs. SOF commanders should acknowledge such a unanimous concern and make adjustments accordingly. If moving around people to take advantage of personalities is seen as a priority and as just internal staff movement (as opposed to a failure to be reported on an evaluation), then it might be easier to implement. This author concludes that SOCOM and the TSOCs must assume that good commanders have to be good rapport builders, and thus if one is identified as not being able to get along then it is a career issue (taking into account the reluctance of commanders to make sure the right personalities are in place).[118] Ensuring that commanders recognize that not all good rapport builders can be good commanders and that not all good commanders can be good rapport builders would support selecting the right people for the right positions.

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[116] As observed by author in 2007.

[117] For instance, if the Deputy J5 is the best person to liaise with the JTF staff, then make him more available to the JTF, especially during certain operations, but do not punish the J5 if he is determined to not be the best person to conduct face-to-face coordination with CF.

[118] As observed by the author in 2007.

Education of SOF/conventional forces and Integration as a priority

Along with screening for personalities as a priority, another solution along similar lines is that of education of SOF and conventional forces and forcing integration to be a priority of both forces. Training Centers and TRADOC schools should penalize both conventional forces and SOF for not working together and using one another to measure success during exercises and during yearly training. SOCOM should require SOF units at least as low as the company level to train with conventional forces at least once a year. Preferably, SOF and conventional forces who will be co-located overseas during their next deployment, should link-up and train together prior to deploying. SOCOM should take the lead in this effort for the SOF side. Other authors have suggested habitual relationships between SOF and conventional forces.[119] Many see Special Operations Forces growing more insular, especially since they have been in demand after 9/11.[120] Increasingly, SOF is collectively forgetting the times when they had to struggle to be accepted by conventional forces so that SOF could be integrated into war plans and operations.[121] If there should come a time when conventional forces are in the lead and have a monopoly on operations, such as during major combat operations, SOF may come to regret this period where many in SOF thought they did not need a good relationship with conventional forces.

Conventional forces should have a part to play in this as well, not only to make current operations more successful, but to ensure future operations take advantage of the entire joint force (and not just conventional forces joint forces). Conventional force staffs, especially at the division level, but also at the BCT level, should be trained on employment of SOF and SOF limitations and capabilities. Conventional forces units should be ordered by Forces Command

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[119] Rhyne, 48.

[120] Sheehan, interview.

[121] Smith, 169; as observed by the author. After the Vietnam War SOF's numbers were cut and the priority was on conventional forces defending against the Soviets in Germany as opposed to unconventional war or counterinsurgency. During DESERT STORM SOF struggled to get included in operations.

(FORSCOM) to train with SOF yearly and preferably with SOF units they will be most likely co-located with overseas. Each of the Armed Services (Air Force, Marines, Navy, and Army) should also make it a priority that conventional forces units, at least at the battalion level and above, train yearly with a SOF unit.

One issue commanders must take into account, however, is that at the current tempo, requiring more training by both conventional forces and SOF could prove problematic. Indeed, several officers interviewed from conventional forces as well as SOF units agreed that at the current time, increasing training requirements on units already pressed for time to recover from deployments, spend time with families, send soldiers to get necessary training, and train up prior to the next deployment could cause negative second and third order effects. Once SOF is able to spend two months in the United States for every one month in theater, then SOF could train habitually with conventional forces.[122] Until then, however, relying on commander's prerogative and luck to make it happen is about the best the Armed Forces can do.

Alignment of LNOs

A fourth solution to C2 issues of SOF in Afghanistan is to align LNOs differently than has been done in the past. As mentioned in the doctrine section, a corps-level conventional forces unit is often provided a Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE). A SOCCE is usually made up of an Operational Detachment Bravo (ODB), or a Special Forces Company headquarters. In practice, ODBs in Afghanistan have been at times partnered with BCTs owing to commander's discretion, co-location, and/or the situation that all of the ODB's subordinate units were operating in the BCT's Area of Operations (AO). Since doctrine should be used as a guide and Afghanistan gives several examples of different ways in which SOF LNOs can be exchanged with conventional forces units, the alignment of LNOs and elements should not be a

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[122] Repass, interview.

general rule but situation-dependent. Described below are four different options for aligning

LNOs and LNO-type elements to conventional forces units.

SOCCENT could designate a SOCOORD to ISAF and a SOCCE to each of the Regional

Commands (see Figure 1 below). This would give the U.S. CJTF in Bagram a SOCCE who

would have OPCON of most, if not all, of the ODAs in RC-East. The SOCCE could still be

TACON to the CJTF just as the CJSOTF is (and OPCON to the CJSOTF through the SOTFs);

however the key would be to co-locate the SOCCE with the CJTF HQ. The SOCCE then would

be in the perfect position to coordinate its on-going operations with the JTF, its near-term

operations to synchronize its support requirements in a timely manner, and to help the CJTF plan

for the longer-term campaign plan for the region. This option would also give ISAF the ability to

coordinate its overall strategy with all forces in theater, as the SOCOORD would also be co-
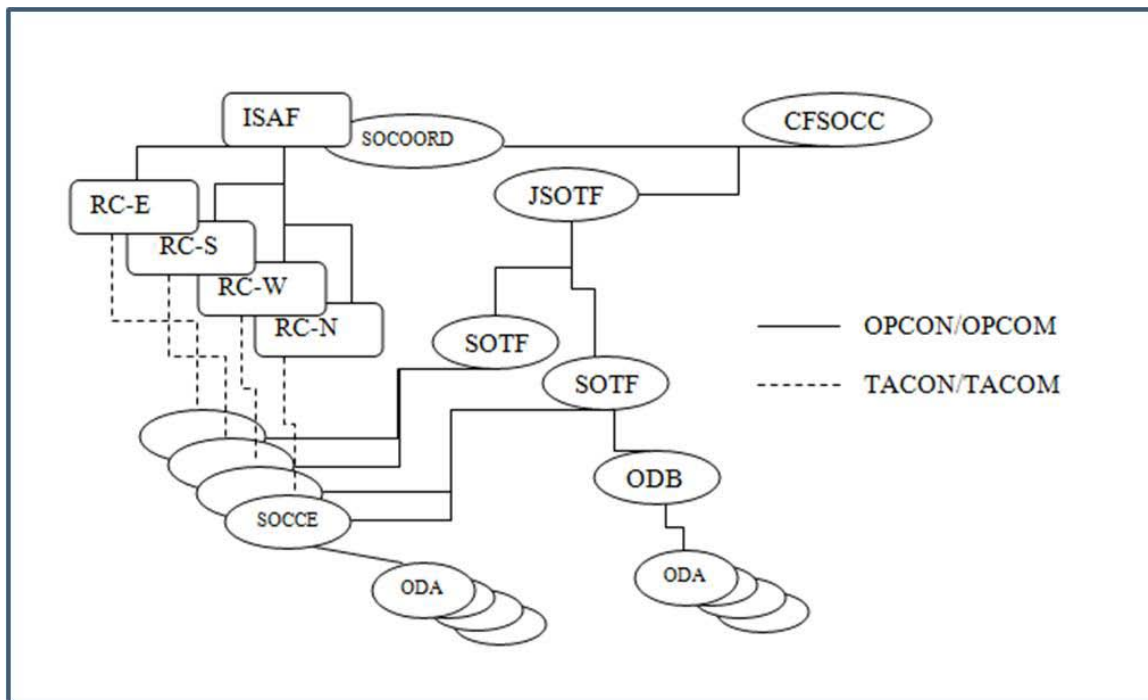
located with the ISAF HQ.

Figure 1[123]

[123] Developed by author.

Another option is to co-locate an ODB with each BCT or BCT-like unit in Afghanistan that has a significant amount of ODAs in its Area of Operations. These ODBs would control all the ODAs in the BCT's AO, but still be OPCON to the CJSOTF through the SOTFs. This situation was almost the de facto situation in the southern portion of RC-East in 2007 as an ODB was co-located with the conventional forces BCT in that area and the ODB's teams for the most part operated in the BCT's AO only. Although this was not the case in the northern part of RC-East, there was a habitual relationship with an ODB that had responsibility for elements both in the northern part of RC-East and also parts of RC-North.[124] One possible alternative to this option would be to have a SFLE co-located with the BCT instead of the entire ODB. This would be based on either a low number of SOF elements in a BCT's AO or an ODB having more responsibility than just the BCT's AO (and thus having elements elsewhere). Lastly, as witnessed in 2007, these ODBs could be aligned on a mission-dependent situation. One ODB moved from one of the other RCs into one of the areas in RC-East in order to facilitate various operations for a specific period of time. The ODB basically operated as a split-team between the two areas and moved in and out during the operation. Once the operation was over the ODB relocated to its original RC.[125] In both of these first two examples, the SOTFs would not only retain OPCON of the ODBs in their respective sectors, but they would also control ODBs not paired up with a BCT. This would ensure that the SOTFs were operating across conventional forces boundaries and bridging the gap between any seams that the conventional forces AO boundaries might cause, an important role for SOF.[126]

A third option is to align Special Forces Liaison Elements with conventional forces BCTs and/or battalions (BNs). These liaison elements would be able to help the conventional forces

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[124] As observed by the author in 2007.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Repass, interview.

units synchronize their operations and plans with those of the SOF units acting within the AOs. Utilizing SFLEs make more sense when SOF units are operating continuously in the same AO and would be habitually operating, if not with, at least in the same area as conventional forces units. In addition, sending a SFLE to specific units might be more temporary in nature in the case where SOF units are operating in many areas both in and outside of the conventional forces unit's AO. In that case a SFLE could be sent on a temporary basis.

Lastly, LNOs can take the place of any or all of these examples, on a temporary or permanent basis. In 2007, two LNOs at the CJTF and one LNO at the CJSOTF from the respective commands sufficed for the most part, although the LNOs from the CJSOTF were not truly representing the commander.[127] It is without question that LNOs could also do great work at the BCT and BN levels as well. What is more important, perhaps, is to recognize that there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution to what type of SOF liaison is exchanged with the JTFs and vice-versa. The alignment of liaison elements should depend on the situation and when that situation changes, even temporarily, SOF and conventional forces should adjust accordingly, without fearing that these adjustments will turn into permanent requirements. As long as the focus is on interoperability, current operations success, and long-term synchronization, determining the correct method of SOF-conventional forces liaison should not be too difficult.

What will be difficult, however, is sourcing robust LNO elements. All LNO elements must come out of the unit in theater, which means lower combat power on the ground.[128] A delicate balance is needed that takes into account the forces needed on the ground and the forces needed to do liaison work. Three recommendations can help alleviate this issue. First, LNOs do not have to be SOF as long as the right people are identified, they have the commander's confidence on both ends, and they are trained properly. To train the LNOs, three options exist: the Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) can train soldiers to perform as SOF LNOs,

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[127] As observed by the author in 2007.

[128] Repass, interview.

SWCS can send out Mobile Training Teams to train soldiers prior to deployment, or JSOTFs can set up their own in-country training effort. Second, LNOs do not have to be SOF officers. Senior NCOs and warrant officers can perform much better than most lower-ranking officers due to the latter's short time spent within SOF. Lastly, CJSOTFs would be wise to keep a "reserve". This reserve could be at least one ODA and enough personnel to cobble together an ODB on short-notice to "surge" into an area to perform LNO-type functions in support of a limited operation (or non-LNO-type operations as needed). What this would require would be the discipline to prioritize every mission and unit and once one or both of these reserve elements were put into action, the least-prioritized ODA and/or ODB would be taken out of the field and take the place of the reserve element.

Alignment of SOF HQ elements

The last area of possible solutions this paper addresses is the partnering of the various headquarters with each other. For instance, since there is a SOTF that is co-located with the CJTF and most of that SOTF's forces operate within the CJTF's AO, it might make sense to align the SOTF to support the CJTF, have the SOTF OPCON to the CJTF, or have the SOTF partnered with the CJTF. Regardless, the SOTF would be responsible for liaising with the CJTF and not the CJSOTF. This is just one example, and, just as the aligning of liaisons, these should not be permanent requirements, but should be based on the situation and remain flexible. In addition, for all of these examples one C2 relationship is not identified, rather it is assumed it could be a supported/supporting relationship or other relationship as needed due to mission, etc.

The first of these possible alignments could be the aligning of the SOTF located in Bagram with the CJTF that is in Bagram. As mentioned earlier, this does not come without problems in that the SOTF may be responsible for units outside of the CJTF's AO (for instance, the SOTF in RC-East also had OPCON of SOF in RC-North). In that case the SOTF would retain OPCON of its units and coordinate with the CJSOTF on movements between the two AOs.

In addition, the SOTF could designate a SFLE or SOCCE to liaise with the RC-North commander in this example. The SOTF in RC-South could have the same situation with the RC-South JTF commander as well, and with the same caveats to adjust forces in RC-West as the other SOTF has with RC-North.

A second possibility is to partner the CJSOTF with ISAF in order to facilitate ISAF's support and awareness of up-coming operations and assist ISAF in battle-tracking SOF. This may require the CJSOTF to co-locate with ISAF in Kabul or, at the least, develop means with which to overcome the distance between Kabul and Bagram and the communications limitations Afghanistan suffers. A more robust liaison exchange between the CJSOTF and ISAF could be a part of the solution if the CSOTF does not co-locate with ISAF. The CJSOTF could still be OPCON to the CFSOCC, but proximity would free the CFSOCC up to liaise with ISAF on longer-term plans and operations.

Lastly, the aligning of the CFSOCC (or "a" CFSOCC, as opposed to the one in Qatar) with either ISAF or with the Combined Force Land Component Command (CFLCC, CENTCOM's land commander in theater) would enable the synchronization of SOF and conventional forces future plans. This issue may have been overcome by assigning Afghanistan a CFSOCC of its own in early 2009. CFSOCC-Afghanistan, or CFSOCC-A, interacts with ISAF and ensures SOF and conventional forces operations are coordinated and long-term plans are synchronized.[129] If Supreme Allied Commander- Europe (SACEUR) is ever given responsibility for Afghanistan, aligning CFSOCC with the JFLCC out of US European Command (USEUCOM) or with SACEUR's NATO staff would perhaps be a better fit. Alternatively, Special Operations Command- Europe (SOCEUR) could deploy to Afghanistan (as the CFSOCC-A) and SOCCENT could do the same in Iraq (as the CFSOCC-I). In the past the ability to deploy and provide the C2 and support functions may have been difficult as CFSOCC was more of an operations tracking

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[129] Maxwell, interview.

HQ and support provider at one time as opposed to a long-term planning headquarters.[130] The personnel number and capability were limited in terms of the ability to do long-range planning and synchronize those plans with outside headquarters. This deficiency, if it still exists, should be corrected immediately.

Conclusions

A multi-faceted approach should be used to address the problems identified and increase unity of effort between SOF and conventional forces. The most important aspect is to ensure that all forces are nested within the overall campaign plan or, if no campaign plan exists, to take the lead and develop and push a campaign plan upwards from those units in the area of operations. The second most important effort is a flexible SOF command and control structure that is tailored to the mission. This will most likely mean a "supported/supporting" relationship, or, as joint doctrine discusses, "mutually supporting". Lastly, the use of liaison officers as long-term planners and as representatives of the commander will ensure unity of effort. In the long-term, and through cultural changes, SOF and conventional forces should develop a priority on integration during training and during operations, as well as robust educational efforts in order to develop understanding of each forces' capabilities and limitations. Less importantly, however still worth mentioning, are ensuring personalities are matched to the positions they occupy and aligning SOF headquarters elements with conventional forces headquarters elements where appropriate. All of these solutions would need to be constantly readjusted and framed in such a way as to account for the situation at the time and how best to encourage unity of effort based on the situation.

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[130] Pascall, interview.

Command and control structural changes could include either dropping the "for FID" from the current "TACON" relationship between the JTF and the JSOTF (in the specific case of Afghanistan), or the terms should be more clearly defined as to what constitutes FID and what does not. Additionally, with the addition of the CFSOCC-A, OPCON most likely can be reserved by the CFSOCC and TACON (or supporting) C2 relationships can be established as the need arises, for limited time periods, again based on the situation. Perhaps most important, SOF must ensure what they are doing is nested with the conventional forces and that conventional forces develop their own plan (even developing one for them if they fail to develop one). Because all of these solutions at some level rest on personalities making them effective, some positions- LNOs come quickly to mind- could be filled based on personality compatibility. Commanders could make it a priority to ensure the liaising and coordination personnel are not those most likely to cause a break-down in coordination. It could be as simple as having the best personality available interacting the most with the conventional forces as opposed to a specific staff position. Another option could be a more formal approach from SOCOM, the COCOMs, the TSOCs, and FORSCOM to require commanders to take personality into consideration and to check-up on the situations between SOF and conventional headquarters via periodic reporting.

There is no doubt that SOF and conventional forces staffs need education on how to integrate with the other's forces and the limitations and capabilities of each. SOCOM and FORSCOM have to make this a priority for units to train together prior to deploying and to train with each other as a normal cycle of events, regardless of whether there is an upcoming deployment or not (keeping in mind this should not be a requirement until SOF deployments are lessened). With this new emphasis on integration, the proper alignment of liaison elements would most likely appear spontaneously through trial and error and mutual agreement. If the solution is one based on the situation and allowed to remain flexible as opposed to turning into a habitual requirement, then it will be more accepted by the SOF community and possibly more useful to conventional forces. Aligning, for instance, an ODB with a BCT and designating the ODB an

ODB for a certain time would seem to be something that was the de facto situation anyway, in at least one part of Afghanistan in 2007.[131] Lastly, if partnering certain SOF HQ with conventional forces HQ makes sense based on the situation, and is understood to be temporary and flexible, aligning different higher-level HQ such as SOTFs with the JTFs, might be more useful to all involved and contribute to unity of effort.

Between Special Operations Forces and conventional forces there should be one unified effort. In the recent past this effort has centered around establishing a relatively stable Afghanistan and denying Al Qaeda a sanctuary with which to threaten the U.S. If SOF actions are actually working at long-term cross-purposes to ISAF's priorities or the Afghan government's objectives, then it is arguable if the efforts of the U.S. will ever result in meeting U.S. national security objectives. Likewise, if conventional forces actions, while meeting certain ISAF goals, are contributing to Al-Qaida growth or are in conflict with Afghan government objectives, then it is also arguable whether the U.S. will ever be able to withdraw from Afghanistan with any confidence. For these reasons, it is the responsibility of CENTCOM , but also the responsibility of Special Operations Command Central Command, the Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command, the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force, the International Security Assistance Force, and the Combined Joint Task Forces to make sure all military forces supporting the Afghan government's COIN efforts are in unison and headed toward the same long-term goals.

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[131] As observed by the author in 2007.

Glossary

Central Command (CENTCOM): U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) located at MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, Florida, is the unified combatant command (COCOM) responsible for US security interests in 27 nations that stretch from the Horn of Africa through the Arabian Gulf region, into Central Asia. USCENTCOM is one of nine unified commands in the Department of Defense. The command was activated in January 1983 as the successor to the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (http://www.centcom.mil/, Globalsecurity.org.).

Coalition (or Combined) Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC): The land component command of a Combatant Command, in this case, ARCENT formed a CFLCC which eventually was transformed into CJTF-7 as the CFLCC became more of a logistics hub after 2003 (and CENTCOM was focused on Iraq). For Afghanistan purposes, CFLCC was the headquarters that initially controlled the conventional force units until the Iraq invasion (Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die,* 12-94; JP 1-02).

Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command (CFSOCC): The Special Operations Component Command of a Combatant Command that is deployed forward to control SOF in a specific area. At the beginning of OEF, a CFSOCC was deployed forward from SOCCENT in Tampa to Qatar and controlled SOF in Afghanistan. Later, CFSOCC focused on Iraq and did not control SOF in Afghanistan. Currently there are plans for CFSOCC to control two subordinate SOCCs: CFSOCC-A in Afghanistan and JFSOCC-I in Iraq. (Commander, USSOCOM).

Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command- Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A): A SOF headquarters deployed forward to Afghanistan to exercise control over SOF. CFSOCC-A is a subordinate command to the CFSOCC in Qatar. CFSOCC-A now synchronizes with ISAF, develops long-term plans, and ensures SOF are nested with higher headquarters to include CENTCOM (Naylor, "New Special Forces Headquarters Comes to Afghanistan", 5).

Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF): A SOF headquarters, usually composed of a Special Forces Group headquarters with augmentation. In Afghanistan the CJSOTF has been aligned with 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) (SFG(A)) prior to 2003 and then 3rd SFG(A) and 7th SFG(A) afterwards. The CJSOTF-A (Afghanistan) was the designated SOF headquarters until the CFSOCC-A was formed in early 2009. (Rhyne, 23-45).

Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF): In Afghanistan, the CJTF is the conventional forces headquarters. For example, in 2007 the 82nd Airborne Division's headquarters made up the bulk of the CJTF (CJTF-82). CJTF-82 in 2007 controlled Regional Command-East, which included an aviation brigade out of the 82nd Airborne Division, the 4th Brigade Combat Team out of the 82nd, the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and many other attached units such as an infantry battalion from Poland. From 2002 until 2006 the CJTF had OPCON of SOF in Afghanistan and went by the moniker of CJTF-76 (author's notes).

Conventional forces (CF): Those forces not associated with Special Operations Forces. In the past these forces would be most associated with the capabilities of maneuver and overwhelming firepower: mechanized and light infantry, armor, and artillery, and their supporting units. Since OIF and increasingly OEF, conventional forces have been involved increasingly in counterinsurgency and other stability-type operations more commonly associated with SOF (Cohen).

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): ISAF is the NATO headquarters in Afghanistan. ISAF was founded in late 2006 and controls most forces in the country. ISAF's chain of

command runs from Supreme Allied Command- Europe (SACEUR) and to the NATO Secretary General, but also is connected to U.S. Central Command when a U.S. general is in command of ISAF (McChrystal).

Liaison Officer (LNO): An officer or Non-commissioned officer, or team of soldiers who coordinate with another headquarters on behalf of their home headquarters. In Afghanistan most subordinate units send LNOs to higher headquarters, but during 2007 the 82nd Airborne Division placed LNOs at their subordinate BCTs- perhaps in acknowledgment of the nature of counterinsurgency wherein the subordinate units all the way down the chain have the most situational awareness. The CJSOTF also sent LNOs to the CJTF, but during 2007 the CJTF had an LNO at the CJSOTF. In addition, the CJSOTF had LNOs at ISAF in 2007 (U.S. Special Operations Command, Publication 3-33).

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF): The U.S. effort to overthrow the Taliban in Afghanistan and ensure that al Qaeda could no longer threaten the U.S. The OEF forces became a synonym for SOF once ISAF was established in order to delineate between conventional forces who fell under ISAF and were bound by ISAF Rules of Engagement (ROE) and SOF who fell under "OEF" ROE (http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/Afghanistan/Operation%20Enduring%20Freedom.htm; globalsecurity.org)

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF): The U.S. invasion of Iraq which led to OEF becoming an economy of force mission. Not only was OEF limited to the amount of forces they could employ because of OIF, but there was no emphasis on long-term planning in OEF due to the higher headquarters' tot al focus on Iraq (http://www.mnf-iraq.com/; globalsecurity.org).

Operational Command (OPCOM): A NATO term for a command and control relationship that most closely resembles U.S. OPCON, with a few minor exceptions, the major one being that under NATO OPCOM a headquarters does not have local direction and control of designated forces (FM 101-5-1).

Operational Control (OPCON): A U.S. command and control relationship that allows for almost total control of the forces assigned. The main authority granted under OPCON is the ability to task organize subordinate units however the headquarters deems fit. The next higher C2 relationship is that of "COCOM" which basically grants all control to a headquarters. The next lower relationship is that of "TACON", which only allows for a limited span of control (FM 101-5-1). From JP 1-02:

> Transferable command authority that may be exercised by commanders at any echelon at or below the level of combatant command. Operational control is inherent in combatant command (command authority). Operational control may be delegated and is the authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission. Operational control includes authoritative direction over aspects of military operations and joint training necessary to accomplish missions assigned to the command. Operational control should be exercised through the commanders of subordinate organizations. Normally, this authority is exercised through subordinate joint force commanders and Service or functional component commanders. Operational control normally provides full authority to organize commands and forces and to employ those forces as the commander in operational control considers necessary to accomplish assigned missions. Operational control does not, in and of itself, include

authoritative direction for logistics or matters of administration, discipline, internal organization, or unit training.

Special Forces Liaison Element (SFLE): For coordination below corps or MEF level, an SFLE, normally built around an SFODA, deploys to the HQ where direct liaison is required (USAJFKSWCS).

Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha (SFOD-A): The main component of U.S. Army Special Forces units. Authorized 12 personnel, an SF ODA can in certain situations operate as a split-team, can support conventional forces or other SOF by conducting Unconventional Warfare, Foreign Internal Defense, Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, and other missions as required (USAJFKSWCS).

Special Forces Operational Detachment-Bravo (SFOD-B): SFOD-Bs are Special Forces Company headquarters that normally contain 12-15 soldiers and provide support and C2 of SFOD-As (USAJFKSWCS).

Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE): The SOCCE is a C2 element based on an SFODB augmented with a communications package, equipment, and selected personnel as required by METT-TC. It may also have liaison elements from other Army or joint SOF units. The SOCCE is normally OPCON or TACON to the conventional forces at corps level. Specific command arrangements should be determined by the nature of the mission and the objectives to be accomplished. The mission of the SOCCE is to synchronize operations between SF and conventional forces. For this synchronization to occur, communications must be established and maintained between the supported unit and the SOCCE and between the SOCOORD and the SOCCE. For more information on the SOCCE, see Appendix B of this manual (USAJFKSWCS).

Special Operations Coordination Element (SOCOORD): The special operations coordination element (SOCOORD) is the ARSOF element within the Army corps or Marine expeditionary force (MEF) G3 responsible for coordinating SO requirements. As an integral part of the corps or MEF staff, the SOCOORD provides a focal point for SOF C4I structure to synchronize SO activities in support of corps missions. The SOCOORD supports corps or MEF operations in the capacity of SO subject matter experts (SMEs), not as a C2 element for SOF deploying in support of the corps or the MEF. For more information on the SOCOORD, see Appendix A of this manual (USAJFKSWCS).Special Operations Command CENTCOM (SOCCENT): CENTCOM's Special Operations Component Command. SOCCENT controls all SOF in CENTCOM's area of operations: the Middle East (globalsecurity.org)

Special Operations Forces (SOF): SOF are those units that are designated as those that fall under Special Operations Command (SOCOM) prior to being deployed overseas. Special Operations Forces in this case include U.S. Army Special Forces, U.S. Army Psychological Operations Forces and U.S. Army Civil Affairs Forces when supporting the CJSOTF, U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) Forces, other SOF when in support of forces controlled by the CJSOTF, and Coalition Forces assigned to the CJSOTF (FM 3-05.20) From FM 3-05.20:

> Special Operations: Operations conducted by specially organized, trained, and equipped military and paramilitary forces to achieve military, political, economic, or informational objectives by unconventional military means in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas. These operations are conducted across the full range of military operations, independently or in coordination with operations of conventional, non-special operations forces. Political-military considerations frequently shape special

operations, requiring clandestine, covert, or low visibility techniques and oversight at the national level. Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets.

Supported/Supporting relationships: Instead of the traditional command and control relationships that conventional forces usually prefer to employ, SOF prefer a "supported/supporting" type of relationship that is much more flexible and mission-specific (U.S. Special Operations Command, Publication 3-33). From 3-33:

> A support arrangement is established when an organization should aid, protect, complement, or sustain another force. Support relationships afford an effective means to weigh and ensure unity of effort for various operations. Support is also a flexible command authority relationship. The commander of the supported force will have the authority to exercise general direction of the supporting effort, to include target / objective prioritization, timing and duration of the supporting action, and coordination measures. The common superior commander is responsible for clearly defining support command relationships. Support relationships work best when there is a high degree of trust and confidence between the affected commanders.

Tactical Command (TACOM): A NATO term closely associated with the U.S. C2 relationship of "TACON". The main difference is that NATO TACOM allows a headquarters to assign tasks to subordinates (JP 1-02).

Tactical Control (TACON): A U.S. and NATO term that means the same for both. TACON allows a headquarters to establish control measures and provide local direction to subordinates. This is usually juxtaposed with U.S. "OPCON" which gives a headquarters the authority to detail to a subordinate *how* to conduct operations, as opposed to just what to do (JP 1-02).

> Command authority over assigned or attached forces or commands, or military capability or forces made available for tasking, that is limited to the detailed and, usually, local direction and control of movements or maneuvers necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned. Tactical control is inherent in operational control. Tactical control may be delegated to, and exercised at any level at or below the level of combatant command.

Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC): A Combatant Command's Special Operations Component Command. In this case, SOCCENT is CENTCOM's TSOC. Normally the TSOC has OPCON of all SOF in the COCOM's theater of operations (JP 3-05; globalsecurity.org).

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